

THE NEW WORLD

School of Theology at Claremont



1001 1322951

by

Charles Allan M.A.



The Library

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT

WEST FOOTHILL AT COLLEGE AVENUE
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA

Reviewed?

2 copies of
this book

6 net

THE NEW WORLD

4501
A5

THE NEW WORLD

BY

CHARLES ALLAN, M.A.

AUTHOR OF

"THE BEAUTIFUL THING THAT HAS HAPPENED TO OUR BOYS"

GREENOCK

JAMES M'KELVIE & SONS LIMITED

LONDON : SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, HAMILTON, KENT & CO. LTD.

T Libr
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

Theology Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	THE NEW WORLD	I
II.	EASTER DAY IN AN ERA OF TRANSITION	17
III.	"WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD?"	29
IV.	ILLUMINATION	45
V.	A VERY PERFECT LITTLE STORY	61
VI.	A SACRAMENT TOO OFTEN FORGOTTEN	71
VII.	THE ENEMY WITHIN THE GATES	83
VIII.	VISIBLE HINDERERS	95
IX.	INVISIBLE HELPERS	109
X.	THE LIFE BEYOND	125
XI.	THE JOYOUS MYSTERY OF THE "GOING UP"	137
XII.	THE HOLINESS OF BEAUTY	149
XIII.	SPRING SONG OF THE NEW WORLD	163

I

The New World

“The hands withdrawn from ours to grasp the plough
Would suffer only if the furrow faltered now.”

ROBERT VANSITTART.

I

The New World

"A New world in one sense is not possible, not in the sense of being a world entirely different from the present, and which has broken with the traditions of the past. I do not think that is humanly possible, but a better world is undoubtedly desirable, and is undoubtedly possible. That depends upon ourselves." So spoke Viscount Grey to the great gathering of students, representing thirty-six countries, which met in the city of Glasgow in the beginning of the present year.

That sane and modest statement of duty and responsibility is surely the irreducible minimum to be expected of a generation which has had the experiences that have been ours in these last fateful years.

There are, indeed, traditions of the past which *have* to be broken with, buried deep beyond possibility of resurrection if the world is ever to breathe freely again, and Viscount

Grey in his admirable address indicated some of them. But he is altogether right in his contention that the world *to be* must grow by orderly evolution out of the world that *is*. Reverence for what is good in the past, recognition of the organic quality of human society, regard to the teaching of experience are inevitable and necessary conditions of all safe and enduring progress.

There is a saying in the Scriptures worth pondering in this connection : "*Another king arose who knew not Joseph.*" The great soul and great services of the kidnapped Hebrew whose political sagacity and ethical soundness had been Egypt's saving, either had not come within the purview of this proud monarch, or was but an old tale that had faded from his memory. All which was a great misfortune and the beginning of trouble, trouble for Israel, but even more in the end for the unremembering Pharaoh and his unhappy country. And just here may be found a note of not unneedful admonition for our own day and hour. One generation goeth and another cometh, and always you have the new king arising who knows not Joseph.

"To forget Joseph" is to be blind to the lesson of history, to the services of those who have worked there, to the teaching, example

and experience of the good who have lived and laboured in years that are gone.

In the guiding of our individual lives we forget Joseph when we ignore the moral qualities that made—and still make—a life like his, strong, beneficent and beautiful; when we forget that chastity, moral integrity, patience under adversity, a heart free from envy, are qualities essential to all wholesomeness of life, and all true service of our kind.

As constituent members of human society we forget Joseph when like the ungrateful Pharaoh we are oblivious of our debt to those who have gone before us, the fruit of whose labours we selfishly enjoy or foolishly squander; when we are criminally unmindful of the wisdom and moral qualities, the self-denying service that have made the earth a habitable home, and when in our ignorance and selfishness we accept all and give nothing, or nothing worthy to the human society at whose breasts we have been suckled, by whose fostering care we are sustained, to be, in our turn, worthy inheritors and stewards of a great patrimony.

As members of the body politic we forget Joseph when ceasing to remember the good that has come to us as a people from the infusion of other blood into the national veins,

our Norman, Saxon, Scandinavian ancestry—our industrial, social and religious debt to Flemish weavers, Huguenot refugees, and all the various strands that are inextricably woven into the web of our social fabric—we become a prey like this persecuting Pharaoh to mean, self-destructive suspicions and disseminate the poison gas which pollutes and degrades the atmosphere for every clear-thinking, history-remembering and God-fearing Christian soul, while it dims the ideal, and hinders the coming on the earth of the kingdom and brotherhood of Christ.

Nor does it take any great acumen to discover in certain other characteristics of the time that the sin of forgetting Joseph is one that is by no means uncommon.

There is a lack of depth and background in so many of our aims and ideals and judgments. We take short views. We are very self-sufficient. We feel so superior to the out of date people who had the misfortune to be born before the days of ragtime music or Jazz concerts. And in art? Listen to your futurist, your cubist, your jig-saw-puzzle painter and just hear how he “slates” the old Masters. And in almost any other sphere you meet the same tendency; the spirit of depreciation, the tendency to belittle what has been before

us. One gets a bit anxious about it sometimes. For after all "we live by admiration, hope and love." And one wonders if all this cheap cynicism and superficial smartness is not doing a serious injury to the soul. Granted that in some cases it is an affectation, a veil of reserve to screen more sacred things, and that in others it may be due to lack of courage, courage to appear as "good" as one really is. Yet the habit is a dangerous one. The man who has not the courage to appear as he is may easily come to be as he appears. Reverence for the truly great, veneration for the really good, lower no man or woman in the estimation of any society whose opinion is worth minding. For these are the qualities that make the atmosphere in which alone sane and wholesome souls are nourished into strength.

After all, there were kings before Agamemnon ; great things had been done in the world before we came into it, and if we do not know this, it is our exceeding loss. The Pharaoh who forgot Joseph forgot humanity and forgot God ; ultimately he got broken against the spiritual laws that are older than the stars. If he had known more of the past and been great enough to learn of it, he might have been saved from some bad mistakes. He might also have gained some fine inspirations.

For blindness to the past foreshortens the future.

A lady candidate (if she is correctly reported) recently declared that she was "not one of the asses who believe in realising the kingdom of heaven on this earth." The good lady did worse than forget Joseph; she (for the moment at least) forgot Christ. And she forgot something else, namely, that it is just the quality of loyalty to the ideal, combined with the instinct to take hold of things by their human end, which according to Benjamin Kidd is woman's distinctive contribution and bids fair to be the most fruitful and influential quality in the making of a better world.

The new "king"—which being translated into twentieth century terminology means the new democracy—will make as big a mistake as the old Pharaoh if he forgets Joseph. It is faith, instructed, reverent of all that is great in character and morals—faith taught of the past—taking Joseph with it—taking *Christ* with it—that is alone adequate to the demand of the future.

Not by flippancy, not by "slating" the old Masters will youth become equal to the mighty tasks that are waiting. We must dig again the old wells. We must drink like our great fathers from the everlasting fountains, the

waters that proceed out of the throne of God.

In reverence, in faith, in love, in humility that is ready to learn at Wisdom's knees, lie a great part of the hope of the new time. Let youth nourish its soul on this food of the gods. If we are to avoid the rocks on which the ancient empires broke to pieces, we must study the old charts, we must learn from the dearly bought experience of those who have navigated these dangerous seas before us.

But having said all this, one has to turn to the other and not less important aspect of the human problem. To reverence for the past must be added faith in the future, faith of the quality defined by a great but anonymous Christian writer as *the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*, or as Dr. Moffatt translates, "Now faith means we are confident of what we hope for, convinced of what we do not see." Here again is material for thought. Faith so defined is clearly no mere academic study. Viewed in the light of the illustrations which follow,¹ it is the vital element in all strenuous living, the root and sap of every kind of heroism, the soul of all great adventure, the iron in the blood of every human who shows grit and courage, the

¹ Hebrews, xi.

guiding star of every pioneer and discoverer in the realm of truth and duty. There is nothing of the "Leave thou thy sister when she prays" spirit here. Faith as defined by the great soul who gave us this epistle is no luxury, no useless, though femininely attractive, adornment. It is the very breath of life, a necessity for everybody who is anybody, a thing without which living is not life. For living is not life when it has nothing to hope for, when it aspires to nothing as yet unseen. All good things in this world have come about because somebody—an increasing number of somebodies—believed in them *when as yet they were not* and had the courage to live for them, sometimes even to die for them ; to die, for the most part, without seeing them realised, yet in the faith that they would one day be realised.

We do not grow out of the need of faith like this. Rather as civilisation advances, as life grows more complex the need of it becomes more imperative. Increased knowledge of the possibilities of good or evil that lie in the womb of the future for the developing and changing world only accentuates the need of some common ideal as to where we would go and what we would be.

For a little, man may be content to live on his past. But not for long will the bank of

experience honour his cheques. History never *quite* repeats itself. "Experience is like the sternlight of a ship at sea ; it enlightens only the track which has been passed over." Without faith, the qualities essential to progress—the qualities of adventure, courage and sacrifice are for ever impossible. For faith as this great Christian declares, alone has power to give substance to things hoped for and assured conviction of things as yet unseen.

To act rightly with a view to the future is almost a complete definition of a good man. A human life is worthy in the measure in which its influence makes for the well-being of society, contributes to a clean, sweet, and brotherly life. The Christian position is that only faith in Christ helps to do that supremely. And so unprejudiced a judge as John Stuart Mill agreed that to model his own life on that of Christ would more than anything else keep a man both personally and socially right ; "Act always so that Jesus Christ would approve your action." So to act is faith, faith at its lowest in Christ as a moral ideal, at its highest and best in Christ as a living friend and saviour in loyalty and obedience to Whom life would come to be what God meant it to be and the Divine purpose for the world would be in the end fulfilled.

And let us remember that the “things hoped for” are not, in the Christian view, vague, impalpable aspirings. They are definite although as yet unrealised ideals: not here as yet but sure, resting on the security of God’s promises. Simply to “hope” for things, even things demonstrably right and Christian, is not faith. Faith is to give *substance* to such things, to have assured convictions regarding them. Which means on the one hand that the things hoped for have here and now substance for *you*, are real, so real that you will risk something—in the last push risk everything—on the certainty of their being true and realisable. And on the other hand that although as yet unseen these Christian things have your full and undivided loyalty and support, that you are convinced they can and ought to be realised.

This is the faith that counts, bringing to the tasks of the hour the adventurous, courageous, sacrificial qualities needed for their fulfilment.

It is the faith that counts but has been sadly to seek in the public happenings since the guns ceased their awful music on the 11th of November more than two years ago.

It was a great opportunity. The nation was malleable then if ever. A great Christian lead would have meant so much to us.

A courageous Christian peace: a loyal support to the League of Nations by men with genuine faith in it as the one really great Christian thing of a public nature that had blossomed out of the carnage, sorrow and red agony of the conflict! Why, that would have lifted us all up. It would have been to a harrowed and broken world as a benediction, as the hands of Christ stretched out in healing over the still quivering wounds on the breast of the troubled earth. Nobler than any Cenotaph would have been *this* memorial, incarnating the very spirit of our splendid men and boys who with no hatred in their hearts went their high and selfless way for home and love and duty and the saving of the world.

But the high thing was not done. The talk was all of interests and not of duties, the public appeals were to the baser passions and not to the chivalrous and Christian instincts which had put a halo of glory about even the awful things of conflict and had sustained the spirits of all the finest of our men amid the appalling and sordid realities of the unspeakable horror that modern war is. "They were a purely disinterested crowd," wrote General Sir Ian Hamilton the other day. They were. And we have "let them down." The spirit

of all that followed has been something like an insult to their sacred memory. To those who loved them the public happenings of those last two years have been little short of a martyrdom. History will have nothing but what is glorious to say about the boys. History will have something of a far other kind to say of the men who have betrayed them, who have wasted the greatest opportunity that ever came to a people, who have sown Europe with dragon's teeth and muddied the waters that might have flowed in purifying streams through every channel of national and industrial life.

But all is not lost. The minds even of Christian men and women have been befogged by the mist. But it is clearing again. The task bequeathed us by our holy dead will yet be fulfilled. Christ will come to His own.

But we must have faith, the realising faith which gives substance to Christian hopes and inspires conviction in Christian ideals. The faith which believes in the power of Christ, working through the convinced and loyal hearts of His people, to substitute for the games of politicians the constructive statesmanship which will work fearlessly and in utter loyalty for the great Christian hope of a united world under the safeguard of no precarious balance of

forces, with its potentialities of red ruin and disaster, but of a force at the bidding of law, the embodied ideal of a Christian conception of nations, not as warring units with conflicting interests, but as constituent elements of a wider and saner ideal, germ and prophecy of the day when man to man the world o'er shall brothers be. Christ died for that. Our boys died for it. And faith which has conviction and loyalty at its heart will believe and work and pray until it come.

II

Easter Day in an Era of Transition

“Who is Horace when the soul is blown about by the winds of eternity?”

JAMES SMETHAM.

“That I may know the power of His Resurrection.”

ST. PAUL.

II

Easter Day in an Era of Transition

In the early days of my ministry I used to treat the Resurrection of our Lord apologetically, in the philosophical or theological sense of that word: as something to be defended or established by argument. And there are all the materials, if one cares to use them, for a great defence. But I am not concerned to do that now: not on Easter Sunday.

The defence of the Resurrection has been taken out of our puny hands. The fact of Christian experience, the story of the Church of God, the providences of God in general and individual history, are all arguments stronger than any which the logical understanding can forge.

On a day like this and in a gathering of Christian people, it seems to me that there is only one thing to do: to possess our possessions, to open our hearts and let the fact do its great work on us. Christ has risen and

has lifted us all with Him. In the radiance of the Resurrection everything takes on new meaning. Life is changed and death is changed. The night has gone. Dawn brightens in the rosy east. Our souls wake and sing, like the birds pouring out on this Easter morning their full-throated melody over a world new born ; a world waking from its winter sleep to fragrance and colour and beauty.

There can be no gloom in Christian hearts to-day, not if we truly believe, not if Christ is real to us, not if we have confidence in Him, not if we hear afresh this morning that most characteristic word of His, *Courage!* which is the true translation of the Greek rendered in our Authorised Version “Be of good cheer.”

Courage ! He said it often in the days of His flesh : to the boy carried by four good comrades into His presence, the boy with the weakened body and some nameless trouble in his eyes : “Courage, son ; your sins are forgiven.” He said it to some fearful disciples facing a future that without Him seemed all dark with uncertainty and foreboding : “Courage, *I* have overcome the world.” And He is saying it to us all to-day on the anniversary of His glorious Resurrection. “Be not afraid : only believe.”

Easter dawns on a troubled world and we

have our home sorrows, but *Christ is risen.* The news rallies like a bugle call. “*Why are you afraid like this?*” *Have faith in God.* “There have been times before this when human society seemed to be putting a knife to its own throat. But something has always stayed its hand and always will.” There have been hours in individual experience when nothing seemed left to live for. But the shadow has always lifted, and lo! earth was beautiful once more and heaven very near. Courage! open the windows of your soul and let the light come in.

Let it fall on all the sacred home sorrows. Think of Paul’s great word, “Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light in His gospel.” We shall all die, but we shall never be dead. Man at his best and highest always hoped that might be true, but there was nothing to make it sure until these first disciples saw their living Lord, and discovered to their joy that in His case nothing essential had been changed. They, who loved Him, saw Him again, and found that death had not broken the thread of continuous life or cut the cord of memory or dimmed the light of love. He was the same glorious Master and Friend who had said, “Let not your hearts be

troubled," who bade "Fear not them which kill the body and have no more that they can do," who had declared that if they loved Him they would rejoice that He was going to His Father—His Father and theirs, as He put it to them now. "Little know we how little a way a soul hath to go to heaven when it departs from the body: whether it must pass locally . . . or whether that soul finds new light in the same room and be not carried into any other, but that the glory of heaven be diffused over all, I know not, I dispute not, I inquire not. Without disputing or inquiring, I know that when Christ says that God is not the God of the dead, He says that to assure me that those whom I call dead are alive." So wrote John Donne—sometime Dean of St. Paul's—contemporary of Shakespeare—"whose prose and poetry alike place him among the immortals." And we can leave it at that. Alive they surely are, and—we may add—in all that made them lovable, unchanged. That is our comfort, and it has been made sure for us by Christ.

On this Easter morning let us take the message to our hearts. There are no dead. Life and immortality, if we know Christ, are not things of doubt now. They are out of the shadow, brought to glorious light and certainty

in the gospel of our Lord and Saviour. Into our hearts come stealing to-day the same wonder and joy which filled the heart of Mary when she found her Lord again, not in a darkling sepulchre, but out in the living world, walking amid the lilies and the red anemones and the green of the young grass.

And ever as the spring comes round, to faith the Lord Christ walks in the glory and beauty of the world and makes springtime in our hearts, touching them with His hands of healing, thrilling our spirits with His message of immortal joy. We know now and are sure that death comes to our beloved as it came to Him, not as an end, but as a great new beginning, a leap into light and freedom, a liberation of the undying energies of the soul, an opportunity of higher service and also of greater helpfulness to those they have left behind. Blessed be His name for ever, Christ has made it all sure. He has broken in upon our darkness with His light. He has filled our souls with peace. In all that made death to be feared He has most truly abolished death. Only a step into light, the lifting of a latch, the opening of a door, and lo ! the loved that have gone before, the old comradeships renewed, the severed friendships of earth knit up again and Love the Lord of all.

But that, great as it is, is not the only message of Easter. The light that shines from the first Resurrection morning illumines all our human way and transforms all our human values. The things of earth are transfigured in the light falling on them from a higher world. It becomes a great thing to live.

Maeterlinck's saying, that we are only distinguished from one another by the communication we have with the infinite, is here seen to be sheer history. The Resurrection of Christ furnished the dynamic of a new era. It made the spiritual environment in which human life became once more a thing of price and infinite possibility. It quickened the intellect as well as nourished the heart. The Resurrection gave Christianity to Europe. It made sacred the things of home : put the protection of religion round personality ; led to the renaissance, the birth of science, the revival of art and of great music, the discovery of printing ; the outflow of the great human energies and activities that have created the modern world. The debt has not always been acknowledged, but it is there. If the West differs from the unchanging East, the reason of the difference lies basally and fundamentally in the quickening of the human spirit that

came from the Incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Broadly and as a matter of history, the old world was buried with Christ, the new rose with Him. And still the Cross, and the Resurrection which authenticated it, lead the generations on. The new values which make modern life glorious are the precious fruits of the first Easter Day. The new terrors which make it hideous are the penalties of our disloyalty and blindness to humanity's living Lord and only Saviour.

It was the hope and prayer of all good men and women, that out of the tragic experiences still fresh in our memories would come a new understanding of the necessity of putting the reins into Christ's hands: that from the Gethsemanes and Calvarys of the battlefields the nations would rise renewed in the spirit of their minds. For the history of the world is the judgment of the world; God's judgment on its ideals and its practices. No one can look with thoughtful eyes on the way the world has come, or on the happenings of these last tragic years, without seeing that ideas incompatible with the fact that God is the universal Father and that all men are His children, have been meeting their awful nemesis. The ruin, the swift ruin in these fateful years of governments and institutions

which were the embodiments of those ideas, might well appear the most hopeful public happening the world has ever seen. But it is never safe to prophesy about the immediate future. We may not be able, as a recent writer¹ has pointed out, to say because we believe in Christ that in this generation or the next there will be a clear and manifest return to God. "Man is a tragic being, for the very reason that he cannot be said either to have turned from God or to have turned to Him with all his heart." And this, as the same writer says, is what makes this human scene what it is at the present hour, a picture not of unity, but of confusion. Some are coming and some are going, just as in the world of the first Christian days. In some the tide is setting away from God. "We will not have this man to rule over us." In some it is setting towards God, towards brotherhood and love. Also the movements are simultaneous, in the same human society, in the same nation, the same community, ay, sometimes in the same heart. And this is what makes the confusion neither, thank God, the calm of death as it would be if the drift were wholly away, nor yet, alas! the uninterrupted current turning Godward, "the flowing tide

¹ Rev. Ed. Shillito, *The Return to God*.

of joy and love." We stand this Easter Day, we and the whole world, at the place where two tides meet "with clouds of foam and sound of many waters." But

"Well roars the storm to those that hear
A deeper voice across the storm."

That deeper voice is in our ears to-day even amid the wash and welter of conflicting wills and aims. "Lo, I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." Christ is risen *as He said*, and His other word will also be fulfilled. The Love that has lifted man from the slime and the pit will yet show us greater things than we have seen. "I will draw all men": draw, not compel. Already in deeper ways than we know or can in the confusion see, Christ is at work. And in the end of the day the victory will be His. No Christian can doubt that. The weakness of God is stronger than men. The pull towards God is mightier than the drift away.

He shall reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet. And God's enemies are not men, but the evils that destroy men. "The eternal Love may take long, but will have us in the end." He that descended is the same as He that ascended that He may fill all things.

That is the Easter faith; the marching

music of the soldiers of the Resurrection. Only believe. Thou shalt see greater works than Galilee or Jerusalem saw, because Christ has gone to His Father. "Why are ye afraid like this?" "O ye of little faith, wherefore do ye doubt." "The troubles of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." The Love incarnate which triumphed over death will yet triumph over sin, both individual and corporate, and out of the world's vast confusions bring harmony and peace. Christ is risen. The government is upon His shoulders and the future in His hands. Hallelujah! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

III

“What’s Wrong with the World?”

“Despite the gifts of science, civilised life remains a sordid and unseemly struggle, and discontents, holy and unholy, are everywhere apparent.”

LEO CHIOZZA MONEY.

“I have come that ye might have life, and might have it more abundantly . . .”

“And ye will not come to Me that ye might have life.”

OUR LORD.

III

“What’s Wrong with the World?”

“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”—MATT. vi. 33.

“THESE things” here mean food and clothing : typical examples of the necessaries of life. And what Christ has been saying and is here saying about them is that they would come not without labour or forethought, but without *mental strain or worry*, if the proper conditions of their so coming were complied with.

Here is something well worth thinking about. Worry can be abolished and all the wearing anxieties that leave their mark on human faces. The jars and frictions that fret both mind and body can be eliminated and the human world function as naturally, in its own proper medium, as the world of Nature. Life on the human plane may be “in tune with the Infinite,” like the grass in the meadow or the lily in the field.

Is this midsummer madness, the ethic of

cloudland, or plain, simple, scientific truth? Does our Lord here put Himself out of court as an authority on the actual living workaday world, or is He once more proving Himself "the Master of those who know"? Have we here a pleasing fancy, utopian, delusive, or a profound insight into the real secret of all the confusions and disorders of the human world? Can it be, after all, the truth that when things material are put first in order of importance, the divinely appointed law of successful living is reversed with inevitably disastrous consequences? That we humans are involved thereby in needless worries, in wasteful conflicts, in anti-social tempers and passions which produce all manner of evils in our own souls and in society, and that there is no real cure for all this until things which ought to be first are put first, when, as a consequence, all will adjust itself and be as it was meant to be?

Is it possible that when Jesus speaks of trusting God in the matter of our material needs He means, not that things provided will come in some mysterious fashion out of the skies, but that they will be produced in Nature's way, which is God's way?—the way God meant when He impressed His own character on man and so fashioned him that

his life in its inmost quality needs more than material bread for its sustenance, and only finds that material bread sweet when in his manner of seeking it man's own spiritual nature is satisfied and God's unerring and bountiful law honoured. Is trusting God—in this connection—just obedience to the divine order: belief that if the spiritual is honoured the material will be secure; while conversely the exaltation of money above personality is Mammon worship, bringing disorder and confusion in its train?

The more one thinks of it the more clearly one sees that this *is* what our Lord is saying, and that it is the simple truth of the whole matter. The world-machine is out of gear, because it is not being run in accordance with its Maker's plan. Its smooth running mechanism creaks and groans, assails the ear with raucous noises and ruffles the temper of the engineers because some devil's grit has, in ignorance or wanton wickedness, been thrown into its delicately adjusted gearing.

To hand one-half of the world over to the sway of unethical forces and reserve the other half for moral and religious uses, is to attempt the impossible. That kind of thing simply may not be done in a realm where spiritual values are paramount. “*Ye cannot,*” said

Jesus, "serve God *and* Mammon." You must trust your heavenly Father utterly or not at all. And if you do so trust Him, why worry? The needed things will come.

Here is something more, something other and deeper than a pietistic counsel. It is a cosmic insight. It is no mere advice to a single individual standing alone in a world of self-seekers. It is a *social direction*: the unveiling of a law; a description of what the world will be—the lines smoothed out from its brow, the worry gone from its heart, and the obsession of mean cares no longer hiding from man the face of God and his brother human—when at length the stone rejected of the world-builders becomes the head of the corner.

So we begin to grasp the real significance of this saying which connects the seeking of God's Kingdom and righteousness with the supply of man's material necessities. Our Lord sees these two sides or aspects of human life, the spiritual and the material, in the relation of cause and effect. And if that seems to run counter to the law that cause and effect must be alike in kind, let us remember—what it is our perdition to have forgotten—that man is essentially a spiritual being. He is something in his own right as well as a producer or

merchant of material things. In the language of philosophy, he is an end and not merely a means. In the language of religion, he is a "soul" and not merely an animated body. He has worth to God, to himself, and to society. And when that essential fact is forgotten by the individual or neglected in human arrangements, the consequences are apt to be disastrous. The result becomes visible in the product, even the material product, since the producer, being what he is, minglest soul—or what he or society has made of his soul—with his *work*, both in the matter and in the manner of it. Cause and effect therefore *are* like in kind, and the relation our Lord indicates does, in fact, exist between them.

Turn now to the words of our text as they appear in the light of the context and let us see what our Lord is here doing.

Taking the case of food and clothes, He typifies in these the elementary human needs in which, and in the provision of which, you have the whole of man's material activity represented—the manufacture and business life of the world. Over them He writes in comforting words, which are the patent of nobility on all the common services of mankind, "Your heavenly Father knoweth that

ye have need of these things." Then, in language that has for long been considered remote from the realities of actual life in the workaday world, He goes on to describe the relation in which these material things stand to the spiritual. He makes the surprising statement that the supply of even these material things, the assurance of them or—as we should phrase it now—the condition of *a healthy manufacture and commerce, functioning properly and guaranteeing the satisfaction of human needs*, is to be sought through loyalty to the higher demands of the human spirit. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, His justice, and all these things will be added unto you." And He concludes His discourse by saying that life based on that teaching will be shown to be founded on a rock, while life not ~~so~~ based will, when the winds blow and the floods descend, be discovered to be built on sand, and the whole edifice will crumble into ruin.

When we have read so far we begin to feel ourselves in the region of real and recent happenings. If any one only six years ago had said that within that short period of time, and solely because of its reversal of what our Lord here declares to be the only safe order—because it put the material first—a great

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD? 37

part of Europe would be in ruins and practically every country on the round earth seething with unrest, we should have laughed at or pitied him, wondering the while that a seemingly reasonable human being, an apparently sane brain, could harbour such a delusion. It seemed all so well founded, so securely based, so firmly buttressed. But the winds blew, the rains descended, the floods came, and the result was just what Jesus said. *The house fell, is falling still, is rocking everywhere on its insecure and sandy foundations.*)

Our Lord foresaw in the days of His flesh the fate of the seemingly substantial fabric of the world's materially minded and materially founded prosperity. "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married and were given in marriage, and *the flood* came. Likewise in the days of Lot they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, but it rained fire and destroyed them; even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." And then it ends, that those so overtaken must not return to their old ways. "Let him not turn back. Remember Lot's wife." "Flood" and "fire" are metaphors, but the insecurity and the ruin are facts less patent in

the lands unswept by war's hurricane of fire, but evident enough to eyes that see and brains that think. (Christ's foresight is to-day sheer brute-fact of history. Man's material body had outgrown his soul. In the world's inverted civilisation the true order was reversed. Hence Armageddon and *its sequel*—the whole habitable earth seething with unrest.

The truth is it cannot be otherwise. "Where there is no vision the people perish," says the Old Book. And whether you take that reading or its alternative, "the people are without restraint," the words stand as a description of what human society is, and cannot but be, while God and soul are pushed into the background and the supremacy of spirit is in practice denied.

(Christ said—He actually said—that all this would happen. He declared that the only way to make even the material world secure was to found it spiritually: on God, on the soul, on character, on personality, on a real recognition of the spiritual nature and worth of man. Do that, He said, and the rest will come.) The human fabric, the constitution of human society resting on character will be secure, will produce automatically, as a necessary consequence, all you require for the needs of the body and of the material life.

Otherwise, although you may go on for a time, for a generation, for many generations and everything may seem secure, there will come a reckoning, a reckoning with the neglected soul. And that soul, undeveloped, dwarfed in faculty and vision, will turn, will strike out wildly, blindly, foolishly, and ruin everything. You cannot neglect the soul with impunity. You cannot rule out God from half the world without dread consequences, comparable to flood or fire in their nature and results.

And one of the results—not perhaps the worst—will be that the material things themselves will be destroyed; financial stability, commercial supremacy, conscience in work, mutual trust, the habit and love of industry, the intelligence to direct as well as the hand to execute. These are all, fundamentally, things of the soul. And when the soul is stunted *they* wither and die, not immediately perhaps, but ultimately and in the end inevitably.

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." The more you think of their significance, the more you are impressed with the utter *realism* of these words of Jesus. Sought first, sought exclusively or

mainly, sought in the wrong order, the quest of material things is self-destructive. Life itself is lost for the means of living. And in the end—although it may not be always realised in the life of any single individual, and not immediately in the life of nations—the material things themselves become insecure, are wasted and ultimately destroyed in the conflicts, within and without, which are the nemesis of the undeveloped or wrongly developed soul.

And the moral is plain to see. No department of life is safe which is not saturated with moral quality, no vocation worthy which is not lighted up ^{and} for those who pursue it by a sense of its social usefulness, of its place in the economy of God as ministering to real human necessities and so helping to achieve the divine plan and purpose in human existence. If the meaning of life is the making of personality, the furthering of the Kingdom of God (and if that be not its meaning, it has no meaning, but is simply “sound and fury signifying nothing”), then all our activity, political, social, industrial, must contribute to that end or be in conflict with the fundamental law of the universe, and ultimately broken against it.

That is the message of the recent world-

shaking calamity. That is the meaning, beneath and behind all surface appearances, of the present confusion and unrest. *That is what is wrong with the world.*

(But would seeking God's Kingdom really help here? Did not Jesus Himself say, "The Kingdom of God is within you"? Yes: for it exists in souls, in right motives and ideals. But for that very reason it penetrates all life, and affects everything in it, moulds its institutions, its customs, its manifold activities. The human world, the whole colossal structure which *seems* to stand rigid and unalterable outside of man, is really the living web woven of his needs—his social, his economic, his spiritual needs. Unlike the passionless world of Nature, the human world is simply man's projection of himself, the changing register from moment to moment, from age to age, of the *condition of his soul.*)

"But did not Jesus say, 'My Kingdom is not of this world'?" He did, and that, like all His sayings, abides as the very truth of the matter. His Kingdom is not on the plane, nor does it function in the atmosphere, of the kingdoms of this world. It does not depend—which was His point at the moment—on outward force for its sanction and support. It derives from the spiritual and rests on the

spiritual. (Its dynamic is in the soul, in inward conviction and truth and love. But if not *of* this world, Christ's Kingdom is most indubitably *in* this world, as well as in the next.) Unworldly, it is not other-worldly, not "a dream for earth too high," "a bird that hath no feet for earth." It functions in the whole breadth of the human. It is wherever living souls are and human interests, which are also divine interests.

(Christ's message is thus very far from being what some pious but mistaken people have made it—a message of quietism, a haven of refuge from the duties, responsibilities, and services of this life. Rather it is a bugle call to action within the actual living world: a profound insight into the cause of the miseries, confusions, disorders and unrests of that world, and a plain instruction as to the way, the only way, of their removal.)

And there is not a man or woman of us, not a youth or maiden, not a human situation, not a problem of the hour, to whom or to which Christ's message does not apply. In the sacred duties of the home, in the school, the office, the shop, the factory, the legislature—for they are all sacred alike—just *where* you are—where, if you are young, you are preparing yourself to be—in your vocation, that portion

of the world's activities to which you specially devote yourself in working hours, *there*—as everywhere else—put God and the soul in the forefront. By the motive and spirit and manner of your work, seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness—His Justice, His great equities, which are the cement of society and the moulding forces of your own soul—seek these first, and you will be doing your humble part to guide the world towards true prosperity and abiding peace.

Do the right thing, the high-toned, honourable, Christlike thing. Let the individual do it, let the nation do it, and we shall come out of all our troubles. Have faith that the right thing is wiser than the thing that may seem more immediately profitable, but does not quite satisfy your own soul, your sense of what is worthiest and best. That, according to Christ, is the real way out for all of us, men and nations alike.

A nation's troubles, like pain in the human body, may be a warning, "God's authoritative suggestions for a better social righteousness." They may also be a prophecy, the growing pains of a new and better order to which, by some deep instinct not yet fully realised or understood, we are moving. An order that will more fully express God's will and more

adequately incarnate, satisfy and develop the spiritual nature of man.

And as we are all involved in the common trouble, and all have our share of responsibility, let us be patient with one another, even with the unreasonable and the violent, and seek to pour healing on the open wounds of the world.

The lesson of Europe in ruins must not be lost. It is not in the old way we must build, or on the old insecure foundation. "Let him not look back," said Jesus. We are committed now in simple loyalty to Christ, and by the way we have, so far, come, to the task of building justice and mercy into all the arrangements of the common life. When we learn to think nobly of the soul, and set ourselves seriously to honour Christ's standard of human values, we shall find ourselves already on the threshold of a new and happier world. The strain will be taken out of human faces. Humanity will get back its vanished peace. We shall be of the brotherhood of the lily and the grass of the field. For the will of our Heavenly Father, who knoweth that we have need of all "these things," shall at last be done.

IV

Illumination

“Our hope is in the aftermath.”

EDWIN MARKHAM.

“Then numbers great of tapers large
Both men and women bear
To church, being hallowed there
With pomp and dreadful words to hear.
This done, each man his candle lights
Where chiefest seemeth he whose taper greatest may be seen.
Fortunate he whose candle burneth clear and bright.
A wondrous force and might doth in this candle lie,
Which if at any time they light
They sure believe that neither storm nor tempest dare abide,
Nor thunder in the skies be heard, nor any devil spy,
Nor fearful sprites that walk by night,
Nor hurt of frost or hail.”

OLD POEM.

IV

Illumination

“Thou wilt light my candle.”—Ps. xviii. 28.

WE might perhaps be tempted to take this as meaning simply, “Thou wilt preserve my life,” that is, keep my light burning even amid the wild blasts of adversity: a sentiment not unnatural in a psalm expressing gratitude for deliverance out of many troubles and dangers. But the second line, which, as often in the couplets of Hebrew poetry, is explanatory of the first, makes the matter plain: “The Lord my God will *enlighten my darkness.*” Clearly it is enlightenment that is meant, and not merely preservation.

The compiler of the Second Book of Samuel incorporates this magnificent ode in his history as David’s Song of Victory. But whether it be David’s or another’s, it is clearly—as Dr. Moulton says—the celebration not of a particular victory, but a thanksgiving for “the victorious mercies of a lifetime.” He has

been in tight places, this man. He has passed through many crises, to describe which he dips his poet pen in the lightning and the storm. It seems to him now in the retrospect as if the very stars in their courses had fought for him, as if God had bowed the heavens and come down. And to the casual reader of the psalm it savours somewhat of anti-climax to say, after all that, "The Lord will light my candle." A meagre result this, surely, of dread experiences and striking providences! A small reward to be the crown and guerdon of a lifetime of striving!

But when you come to think of it, what else is all the hurly-burly for? What does it profit a man to have lived through great experiences, if they light no candle in his mind; if he has learned nothing by them; if he is no wiser; if things are no clearer to him than before?

Whenever you begin really to think of life, of this world with all its dread machinery of sin and sorrow, you realise that there is no real recompense save that the harvest of it all should be garnered in living souls who are thereby advanced some little way on the road to wisdom. The psalmist is right. Experience which lights no candle in the soul is barren and fruitless. The toil and travail of

history are in vain unless they bring illumination, make the meaning of life a little plainer, reveal the path in which it were wisdom for human feet to tread.

It is so in the broad field of history, and it is so in the individual life. There is no reward comparable to this—there is, in truth, no other reward—that through our experience of life, our falls and uprisings, our joys and sorrows, our pleasures and pains—all the play of God's hand upon us, His mercies and His judgments—we should come at last to what John Masefield calls “the glory of the lighted mind.” That the story of our own hearts, the meaning of life should glow with sudden light and the fact of God stand out, because the true self within us is at length awake; because the smoking wick has caught fire at last, and before its clear and steady flame the darkling shadows flee.

The symbolism of the candle has, as we all know, an ecclesiastical and sometimes also a superstitious significance. But the psalmist's lit candle was not a thing of wax and wick. It was his own spirit touched by the flame of God; his own awakened nature glowing like a lamp because mind and heart, intellect and affection, thought and emotion had taken fire. It was in this way that he looked for the

Lord his God to enlighten his darkness. A psychologist before the days of psychology, a philosopher by the study of his own heart, the psalmist by a profound insight discerned the truth that it is a lighted mind which illumines history. He knew, like Dante, that the heart must glow before the mind can see ; that there are things in life which only yield their secret to "intelligence ripened in the flame of love." And he longed for that final blessing, that last and highest gift, the awakening, the kindling of soul which would light up for him the whole meaning of his human way and the whole mercy of his God.

He had come through deep waters. He had been in the hurricane of fire. In the hour of his extremity he had cried, as he tells us, to God. And wonderfully he had been helped. It was as if the tread of God hastening to his relief had shaken Nature to its foundations, as if earthquake and storm had been his allies, and in the lightning God had unloosed for him His own "terrible swift sword." So the poet's imagination, his grateful and adoring heart, looked back and read the mystery and miracle of his deliverance.

Yet it was no mere miracle, no mere "interference of the gods," the psalmist chronicled.

It was only that he had worked out his own salvation with awe and reverence, seeing that it was God who worked through his instrumentality to do what seemed good to Him. In the hour of need, resources of unsuspected strength had been discovered. "For by Thee have I run through a troop, and by my God have I leaped over a wall." "He maketh my feet as hinds' feet." "He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms." The psalmist sees God in these things, and he sees them in God. He traces all deeds of noble daring to their fountainhead. He sums it all up in this: "He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy and them which hated me: because they were too strong for me! Thy right hand hath holden me up," he cries, adding—here his face grows soft and tender with some gracious memory—"and thy gentleness hath made me great." As if he had a heart-tendering vision of himself and all men existing only under "the covert of God's patience."

All this he tells and much more. It is all past now: past but not forgotten, written rather on the tablets of his grateful heart, engraven on mind and memory for ever. But

there is something which is not past, some thing, indeed, which has not yet fully come. And that is the full realisation of the meaning of it all, the result in the soul of him who has been the subject of God's saving mercies and has experienced so great a deliverance. The psalmist is waiting the one word more, the last touch that makes the grace complete. "For Thou wilt light my candle," he cries. Thou wilt not deny me the inward illumination, the afterglow in which all shall be made luminous, the revelation of the love-awakened heart, the glory of the lighted mind. That was the psalmist's confident hope, his expectancy and his prayer.

It should be ours also, for we, too, have been in deep waters and have seen the mighty hand of God. And what shall it all avail if our souls are unenlightened and unaware: if all the dread happenings—and heart-tenderings—of these last years do not bring to us and our people the glory of the lighted mind?

For beneath and behind all else, in the living heart and core of it, this happening of our time has been a moral experience. We have seen the unveiling of the human heart, its awful possibilities of evil and of good. In a crucial moment, a turning-point of history, we have seen the hand of God outstretched.

And in the heightened emotion of the hour, when all hung in the balance, we saw—we really saw—where the finger of God was, not obscurely, pointing us and all the world.

Our one hope *then* was in the supremacy of the moral forces, and their power to rally to their support the human emotions and energies through which the love and justice at the heart of things could work out their beneficent purpose. The hope was not disappointed. In ways that were and still are wonderful to us, *God bowed His heavens and came down*. And we vowed ourselves in the high hour to follow where the Finger pointed. We consecrated ourselves by many a prayer, by many an utterance of our public men, to the task of building the *new world*; the world where force would be at the call of pooled reason and love; where the implications of brotherhood would be wrought into the web and woof of human affairs.

But let us pause here a moment to reflect on a difference between the psalmist's experience and our own. For difference there is, and a reason for the difference.

He pleads for the lit candle, the mental illumination, the deep heart experience that shall touch his spirit as with God's own flame and dispel the darkness from the face of the

world. Not even in the hour of his deepest danger had he known the experience. And not even yet has it come to him as with reverence and gratitude, most deeply felt, he passes in review the happenings of those tragic years. The shadow still lies darkly on so many things: the riddle of human existence is so hard to read. He is reaching for something still out of sight: believing that in his heart there is the prophecy of its coming: that somewhere, somehow it *will* come. Shall we not dare to say that he was really looking for Christ, "the light"—as old Simeon said when he took Mary's child in his arms—"to lighten the nations and the glory of His people Israel." Christ the light of the world who has lit so many candles, who has banished the darkness from so many lives, who has touched so many spirits with holy fire.

The difference between the psalmist's experience and our own in the dark hour that came upon us, is the difference of Christ. The true light had long been shining for us, only the veil of our pleasure-loving ways hid its glory from our eyes. When the danger, driven long ago, as we thought, to "the distance and the dark," crept out upon us and we stood out "pale, resolute, prepared to die, which means alive at last," then we saw. Saw

what Christ meant to us. Saw what He expected of us. There was nothing to prevent us from seeing, for the truth was familiar to us. It was not mere *mental* illumination that was lacking in our case. Rather it was the moral vision only possible, in its fulness and clearness, in an atmosphere of reality; in souls quickened by the opportunity and the necessity of sacrifice and devotion. The kiss of that flame of God lit the candle, the smoky veil parted and we saw where duty lay, where the voice of God summoned us, where and in what direction, for the moment and *afterwards*, the true path lay to the shining goal. The candle was lit, if not in all, at least in thousands of awakened souls. Its light glowed in many a heart, in churches, in halls of learning, in newspapers transfigured with the light of Christian idealism, in workshops and palaces, in Parliament chambers, and with clear and heroic glow in the men who gave themselves, as they believed, for the saving of the world and the ending of the barbaric horrors of war.

It was a great hour, despite its terror and its poignant pain. And in the midst of it all walked Christ, heartening the faithless, comforting the sorrowful, rebuking the grovelling civilian passions which stained the white glow

of our young knighthood's devotion ; pouring the nobler passion of His cross into the souls of His brave brothers and sisters in the field and in the home.

The candle was lit then, and the glow of it filled the world. In its light, streaming from a thousand lives, the great things of Christ's cause and Kingdom—His and humanity's and God's—stood out plainly as never before in human memory. Unlike the old psalmist we were not in any real doubt *then* as to the significance of our experiences. We had the mental illumination, because as fact of history and as inward experience we had Christ.

And now we sometimes wonder if the tasks vowed in these hours of insight are really in process of being fulfilled, if the results are to be at all commensurate with the experience. All down the centuries Christ has touched so many souls with sacred fire, and the golden deeds that have brightened the face of the world gathered ever round these centres of living flame. But the consequences have hitherto been neither so widespread, so far-reaching or so abiding as the need of the world demands. Is it to be so still? Is Christ, the one true light, the giver of the sacred fire, still outwith the strategic centres of the world's energy? Do we see Him stand-

ing to-day as He has stood in the long centuries that lie behind, the one true light in the darkness of a world that *seems to be going anyway but His?* A world that has known the physical deliverance without receiving, in any deep and effective fashion, the spiritual illumination : that has not learned the meaning of its own experiences or recognised the day of its visitation.

It looks sometimes as if, indeed, it were so. And yet I am persuaded it is not so really. Not nearly so much as things we read in newspapers would lead us to think. In ordinary times, in the days before the war, for example, a stranger from Mars would have gathered from our news-sheets the impression that the population of these isles was chiefly engaged in theft, fraud and housebreaking. But it was not really so. The great bulk of us were home-loving, law-abiding, law-respecting people. And the same optical illusion and false perspective is given to-day. True, we have a long way to go, our statesmen have a long way to go, and those who represent various interests within the nation, which in the deep heart of them are not really conflicting, but seem for the moment to be so. There are many things in contemporary happenings not from above but from below. And yet one has reason

very often to be humbly proud of much in the national spirit and temper to-day. We should gladly see more signs everywhere that men were learning wisdom from the trials and testings of past years. But who shall say that no candles are lit and still burning brightly, that the Spirit of Christ is not moving among men, that there is less and not more reason for the faith of John that the Christ he knew and loved had a cosmic significance, was built, as it were, into the very structure of things, and that He is light for all men that come into the world even when they do not quite know it?

That thought I take to my very own heart and find it opens many a door and explains many a strange happening. I have faith that we shall come out of all our present confusions.

But I am also convinced that the only way out is Christ's way : the way that became so plain to us in the days of our trial when our hearts caught fire at the holy flame and we saw the meaning of life and the way God was calling us. Saw, too, how the denial of Christ, the flouting of His precepts in the governance of life, was the prelude to disorder and disaster, and, seeing, vowed ourselves to seek a nobler way in the things of men and nations.

In those revealing days God lit our candle. And we must keep it burning. The light

within is in very truth God's crowning mercy : the love within, our one true guide.

Patience with one another, in the common perplexity : good-temper, goodwill ; to spread love everywhere, "one loving spirit setting another on fire." *That is the way out.* Be it ours to pursue it in "the glory of the lighted mind."

V

A Very Perfect Little Story

“Every man feels instinctively that all the beautiful sentiments in the world count less than a single lovely action.”

JOHN RUSKIN.

“Our thoughts and emotions are often but spray flung up from hidden tides that follow a moon no eye can see.”

W. B. YEATS, *Ideas of Good and Evil*.

“Men who by faith . . . proved valiant in warfare, and routed hosts of foreigners.”

Hebrews (Moffatt's translation).

V

A Very Perfect Little Story

"And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab the captain of the host was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country. Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast thou lacked with me, that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country? And he answered, Nothing : howbeit let me go in any wise."—I KINGS xi. 21, 22.

THIS is a very perfect little story, and well told, despite the fact that Hadad is introduced (ver. 14), not as something in his own right, but simply as an adversary of Solomon, one of the thorns in the cushion of that uxorious king, a whip of small cords in the divine hand to chastise the son of David when he forgets himself.

Now Hadad may have been an instrument, but he was also a man. We are not told much about him, but the little we are told makes a powerful appeal to our sympathies.

He was still a child when his people suffered a crushing defeat, followed by a deliberate attempt to exterminate the whole male popu-

lation. Some of his father's servants managed to get away and to reach Egypt, carrying the little chap with them. Hadad grew up with Pharaoh, who was kind to him, and married a young sister of Pharaoh's queen. A baby boy was born, and then—perhaps—the mother died, for the queen herself weaned the child, and he was brought up with Pharaoh's sons.

Years passed, and Hadad had come to be regarded as a completely naturalised Egyptian, when something happened which changed the spirit of that dream. That something was the news that the king of Israel had died, and that Joab, the aforetime scourge and would-be exterminator of the Edomite race, had died too.

The tidings led Hadad to give utterance to what, no doubt, had been long in his heart. "Let me depart," he said to Pharaoh, "that I may go to my own country."

So it was out at last. The man was homesick. Mysterious forces were tugging at his heart. The mountains were calling him, the hill regions to the east of Arabah, where his fathers had lived and waged their bloody warfare with Israel from generation to generation. "Freedom's battle," Hadad would call it, and not unjustly, for the Israelites were in no small degree responsible for the bad blood

and recurrent warfare between the two races. In any case, it was "his own country," and there was a wondrous music in the phrase.

Something of another kind may have appealed to him also, the desire to get, as we say, "a little of his own back again," to get a blow in at the would-be exterminators of his race. His mind, in any case, was made up, and he was going home.

The way was clear, for his wife was dead. There was the child, of course; but if he—the father—failed, if he fell as his own sire had done before him, the boy, at any rate, would be all right; Pharaoh and queen Taphenes, the lad's good aunt and foster-mother, would see to that. Only one thing remained to trouble him. How would Pharaoh take it, Pharaoh who had been to him a second father, and had treated him literally "like a prince"? Would he understand? Would he think him ungrateful? When Hadad broke it to Pharaoh, Pharaoh certainly did not understand. Was the man really an ingrate after all? Did he not know when he was well-off? "What hast thou lacked with me that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country?" Hadad's benefactor was puzzled and, if the truth be told, just a little hurt. "But what lackest thou with me?"

And Hadad answered, "Nothing"—all the love and gratitude of the man glows in that simple word—"Nothing: howbeit let me go in any wise."

Take it as it stands it is a perfect little story. I know only two sayings that are an adequate comment on it, and both are in the good Book itself. One is this: "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth," and the other, "Man shall not live by bread alone." "Not by bread alone," but by deeply implanted instincts, things mysterious, God-given, part of the very stuff and texture of every clean and honest soul. Love of his own country being one of them, the call of the blood that makes him one with her to stand by her in the hour of her need, of her great opportunity. Pharaoh might not understand this. If so, Hadad felt he could not explain it to him, and so to the single word, which was a brief but eloquent tribute to his benefactor's kindness, he added simply, "Howbeit, in any wise, let me go." For there are feelings deeper than all speech, instincts rooted in the very stuff out of which the soul of a man is made. These, when the hour strikes, simply rise and take command and all else goes down before them, shrivels in the white flame like chaff in a devouring

fire. When Hadad said, "Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country," he touched the quick of one of them. "My benefactor, my second father, my best of friends, I lack nothing, nothing that you could give me, only let me go."

Go he did. And although the narrative here is silent as to the rest, there are indications in the subsequent history that he did not go in vain. Doubtless his country went down in the end: So, for that part, did Judah. All that is brute fact: it belongs to the gross body of history. But a story like this of Hadad belongs to its living soul. The success or non-success of the enterprise is a detail. The great thing is that Hadad followed the gleam, that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

"Man shall not live by bread alone." That, according to Moses, was the key to the Hebrews' unique and wonderful history. Hadad showed that it belongs to all history. No *man*, anywhere, lives by bread alone. No man is great by his possessions, but by his soul. He is no man unless he is prepared to live and, if need be, to die for something greater than himself—for home, for love, for honour, for freedom, for God. It is on these great lines the world is built. Mazzini traced

the anarchical disorder of French socialism to the process by which the worship of material interest became its watchword. "They spoke of money, when they ought to have stirred up souls in the name of the honour of France ; of property to be acquired, when they ought to have spoken of duty. Hence their failure." Yes, and hence all failure. Men, after all, heroic men, are not ruled from the pit of the stomach. "What lackest thou with me?" "Nothing : only let me go in any wise."

It was great. The thing shines like a star, through the blood-reddened haze of these old, unhappy, far-off things and battles long ago. A world with such stuff in it has the promise of greater things. It is not of the earth, earthly. It is of the kin of the Lord from heaven. The stream of patriotism is purified as it runs. By and by we shall all learn that he loves his country best who loves her in God, and loves her as an instrument for bringing the Kingdom of God. But better even an imperfect ideal than to ply the mud-rake of worldly success with one's back to the stars. Better anything than to be deaf when the spirit calls, to gain the world and lose one's own soul. How can a man *be* a man who has nothing for which it would be sweet to die? who sets up no mark of ever-

lasting light amid the howling senses' ebb and flow?

And that is the message that comes to us from Hadad's story, as it has come to us again in these last years from the reddened fields and engulfing waters where so many sons of our own and other races have won their immortal crown. Home, possessions, prospects, a familiar and exquisitely lovely world: all that, brave men put behind them without one backward look. Materialism never had such a shattering blow as when these brave young backs were turned on her.

Surely for us all now the guiding lights will shine more brightly, and we shall—else greatly sinning—put away all miserable aims which end with self, that the land the lads so loved and served may be worthy of so great and so pure a sacrifice. “Lord bless and pity us, shine on us with Thy face, that Thy way may be known on earth, Thy saving health among all nations.”

VI

A Sacrament
too often Forgotten

“Send them away.”

THE DISCIPLES.

“Give ye them to eat.”

THE LORD.

“Thou wert broken 'mongst the dead
That our hunger might be fed
Even with common daily bread.

S.B.

Whence in things both great and small
Life should be transfigured all
To ■ high church festival.

Not with host to be adored
But with each man's daily board
Counted holy to the Lord.”

W. B. ROBERTSON, *Table Triplets.*

VI

A Sacrament too often Forgotten

"Then He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude. . . . And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you : this do in remembrance of Me."—LUKE ix. 16, xxii. 19.

LADY GLENCONNER in her delightful book, *The Sayings of the Children*, tells how one day at luncheon time she noticed her little son, "who was sitting near her," suddenly bend his head, and under the table in his lap she saw his two hands quickly put together, and as swiftly part again. It was so instantaneous that she was hardly sure she had the true impression, so she whispered :

"What were you doing then?"

"I just quickly asked for forgiveness."

"Why?"

"Because I dropped bread."

"His mother could say no more then, because there were many present, and this passed in whispers, but it set her thinking, and she

traced it to having once told the children that we should never misuse bread, or dishonour it, that we should pick it up if we saw a piece fall lest it should be stepped upon, because it had been taken once as a great symbol."]

It was a fine thing to tell the children, that all bread should be sacred because of its use in the Holy Supper. But bread, in the hand of Jesus, was a sacred symbol even before the gathering in the upper room at Jerusalem.

Our texts suggest to us that there were really two Sacraments, the meal under the shadow of the Cross rightly named the Last Supper, and the earlier happening on the sunny slopes of Galilee. It, too, was a Supper—for they had come to the close of a perfect day—and a Sacrament, for the Lord blessed the bread and brake it and, handing it to His disciples, said, "Give ye them to eat."

The two Suppers are at once like and unlike, and there is teaching both in the similarity and the contrast. The first as truly as the last, although in a different degree, is a Sacrament, being, indeed, the Sacrament of man's need of God, as the second—in one aspect of it at least—is the Sacrament of God's need of man. For it was out of Christ's desire for love and remembrance that the second feast was born.

We go sadly wrong when, in speaking of the feeding of the thousands, we lay the emphasis on the *miracle*. To do that is not only to miss the point of the whole incident, but also to forget that our Lord never laid any emphasis on the miraculous in the case of any of His wonderful works. Quite the opposite. He did no miracle for a miracle's sake, but always for some human or divine reason. He deprecated entirely, and sometimes emphatically, the craving for signs, and had a very low estimate of their value as an educative or moralising agency. It was His way—and this is true even of His miracles—to seek spiritual results by spiritual means. So when we think of miracles as just miracles, miracles and nothing more, we miss the real value they had in His eyes and ought to have in ours.

Take the present example. Our arithmetical minds fasten on the fewness of the loaves and the greatness of the multitude, and, by their mode of telling the story, the writers of the Gospels seem rather to share that viewpoint. But the true meaning of the incident lies elsewhere, lies, indeed, in the fact that it was in essence as in form sacramental, a holy communion of the common life. "He took the loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to His disciples to set before them." Throw your

mind back into the circumstances. Jesus has had a long hard day. Both He and His disciples have need of rest. The work of healing, for the time, is over. But the great concourse of people lingers on, not, be it noted, because, but in spite of their hunger. They seek something more, they scarcely know what. It is not bread; that Jesus should provide them with that could scarcely, in the absence of all precedent, have occurred to them. Yet they waited. "Send them away," said the disciples, "let them go to the villages and buy bread," which, of course, they could quite easily have done, for there were villages near. Jesus, it is sometimes said, wrought a miracle to save the multitude from starvation. But that is absurd. They were neither starving nor in danger of starving, not with villages near where bread was waiting for them. Jesus had compassion on the multitude, and so had the disciples. But His compassion had a deeper root than theirs. It gave Him the real clue to their great unwillingness to depart. He saw that, while they needed bread, it was not bread only, but bread and something more. And it was not bread, not mere bread, He gave them. It was bread with love behind it, bread which was more than bread, because it spoke of the

divine thoughtfulness of Him who created it and gave it to them consecrated by prayer and the touch of His human hands. It was here as elsewhere: Christ "seeing the multitude was moved with compassion." For the multitude—the common man—is so inarticulate and yet in deeper moments so eager for self-expression, so eager to hear some one speak the thing that is dimly and darkly moving in heart and mind. And such a moment had come for this multitude. They were seeking instinctively, half blindly, for the satisfaction of a longing, deep, elemental and in its essence spiritual, which, like the latent music of a viol touched by a master hand, had stirred within them in presence of Christ, His works of healing, His gracious words, the magic of His personality. And thus the miracle—which to Christ was no miracle—was born and the bread passed from His hand to His disciples and from them to the multitude seated on the green and sunny slopes of Galilee. It was this fine insight of our Lord into the human heart, into man's enduring need of love, that made of the scene a veritable Communion, filling the occasion—man's need of secular bread—with the significance of a holy Sacrament.

It was a great lesson. Every human being

needs bread, and can, of course, get it by taking the necessary means. He can work and he ought to work, or if he happens to be where for the moment there is none, he can, as the disciples said, "go into the villages and buy." But it is not by secular bread alone that any man truly lives, but also by the "something more." And it is that something more, even in and with his secular bread, whose presence or absence mean so much in every way for every human on this earthly ball. The Master saw it that day in Galilee and wanted His disciples to see it: wants them to see it still: wants us to see it to-day. It is the special task of our generation to see it and to embody the vision in the facts, arrangements and conditions of the common life. To bring into all human affairs the healing of insight, the reconciling magic of the human touch.

Doubtless the disciples, although a little weary of the multitude, had an interest in them as possible converts. But Jesus wanted them to have another kind of interest in them, as men and women and children, as fellow-humans. And whoever has ears to hear what the Spirit is saying unto the Churches must know that it is a similar interest that is demanded of Christ's disciples now. "Give

ye them to eat" the Master said, and is saying still. And if we answer, How can we? What is one man's influence, one man's store of insight or love or sympathy? here are only five barley loaves and three small fishes, and what are they among so many?—if we so speak, His reply is now, as then, I will see to the supply if only you have faith enough to use what you have got.

The divine-human touch on the world's secular bread, that is the work to which we are all summoned to-day. It is emphatically the work of the Church. Would it be greatly wrong to say that it is what the multitude has missed most at the hands of Christ's disciples, recognition of the human in them, of what they and we and all men have in common, because the touch of the same Maker's hand is on all of us, high and low, rich and poor alike? Not bread, but love. It is that which the multitude needs most, and which, if it understood itself, it misses most. And it is through the giving of that, by His disciples in His name, that, in the end, Christ is to utter, over the seething unrest of the world, His great "Peace be still." It needs faith and courage, truly, to obey our Lord's command, "Give ye them to eat." Faith that what men really need is God, mediated by human

hearts and human hands, God in human lives that have been refined, changed, humanised. Courage to appeal to the deepest in men, and call them to the highest : courage that will neither pander to the lower instincts of the crowd nor toady to the despot. Courage, really to take the holy bread that is for the world's saving, and bear it in pure hands into the everyday world, where it is needed most, and where it is often seen least.

To bring new elements of good into the common life, a new spirit, a new sympathy ; to leaven the whole seething and troubled mass of the world's life with the Christian spirit : to do *that* is most really, most truly to bring Christ to men. When Christ's Church, through her members, with the compassion of Christ in her heart and the bread He has blessed in her hands, sets herself to that holy task, we shall begin to see things happen. It is her true service, and when she sets about it in Christ's name, she will find her store of love and faith and holy enthusiasm growing with her task. She will have learned the lesson of the *first* Supper, the Sacrament of man's need of God.

And by the same token she will have discovered, from a new angle, the truth of the *last* Supper, the Sacrament of God's need of man.

"He took the bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and giving to His disciples, said: Take, eat, this is My body broken for you: *this do in remembrance of Me.*" Christ said that because He really wanted love, and needed love, never more than just then, under the shadow of the coming cross. In Galilee, sunny Galilee, in the days of His popularity, and in compassion for the multitude inarticulate, shepherdless, He took the bread, and giving thanks, sent it on its holy mission. That was because *they* needed love.

Now it is *He* who needs love, the love of His own, and craves in that parting hour a place in their hearts and memories for ever: in theirs and in ours.

God needs me. It is a strangely moving thought, one that goes right to the heart, and it is the thought that motived and shines not obscurely through the happening of the upper room in Jerusalem amid that little company of the first Christian men. He needs my love as I—oh so greatly—need His. He has no other sure hold on me than this, that I love Him, and in the glad constraint of that supreme love, love all who need my love, and serve all who need my service. And we shall none of us have grace enough to keep, in a

world that needs it so, the command of the first Supper, "Give ye them to eat," unless, loving and remembering Christ, we dwell at the one enduring source and inspiration of every helpful service of men. "They who enter the service of the people," says Canon Barnett, "take a solemn Sacrament; for they handle the most sacred things of life, their brothers' souls."

In Galilee, on the green grass, Christ broke the bread of that Sacrament, the Sacrament of man's need of God. In Jerusalem He broke bread again, and in His plea for a place in His disciples' love, taught the complementary truth of God's need of man.

The two Sacraments need each other, complete and explain each other. And when both are equally honoured, this dark world will be lifted into the light.

VII

The Enemy Within the Gates

"He came unto His own home, and His own folk received Him not."—JOHN i. ii.

"It was in Jerusalem, as He expressed it in terrible irony, that the Prophet of Prophets needs must die. On our battlefields, in our music-halls, in our theatres, He may be *neglected*, but it is in our churches and chapels that He is crucified afresh to-day."

The Christ We Forget.

VII

The Enemy Within the Gates

"A man's foes shall be those of his own household."—MATT. x. 26.

THE first light on this saying is given in the circumstances under which it was spoken. Christ was sending His disciples on a mission, and is here preparing them for the difficulties that would attend their work. Our Lord clearly foresaw that the message with which they were charged would—in the first instance and quite inevitably—disturb and disintegrate. For the time, at least, the demand for a higher loyalty would conflict with other loyalties on a lower level.

There was no escaping that. He Himself had not escaped it. His own brethren at first did not believe in Him. His good mother herself had been among those who thought Him mad. And, in that matter also, the disciples—both the original Twelve and those whom they were to win—would find that they were not above their Master. Well-

meaning hands would hold them back; old ties and instinctive affinities would exert their whole weight and even change to bitter resentment in the endeavour to prevent them following where conscience, duty, love to God and the call of the world's need were drawing them.

That had all to be faced if the work was to be done. Their foes would be of their own household. They also would have to take up *that* cross, even as their Master had, and follow in His steps. The family is a divine institution. But even that high thing might be, and often was, the foe of the highest, as in measure it is still, especially when its atmosphere is worldly and conventional. Meant to be the friend and helper of all things high and true, family instincts and associations may nevertheless become a real hindrance to the soul's deep life, taming the conscience, clipping the wings of high adventure, stifling the call of duty. And if that is still true in measure after two thousand years of Christianity, what must it have been when the claim to follow Christ meant not only the outraging of convention, but also of religion as religion was understood and practised.

Christ never kept from any of His followers the knowledge of what they had to face; His

appeal was always to the heroic and not to the self-protective instincts in the human heart. And so here at the outset He tells these first Christian men quite plainly that they are not going on a picnic. They are "up against it," and that in all sorts of ways. "You shall be hated by all men on account of My name." But there was something even worse; for the enemy would be within the gates as well as without. "A man's foes shall be those of his own household." Even their natural allies would fail them in this crisis, and the natural affections prove traitors. The enemy would be behind as well as before, within as well as without, and the soul which had seen the vision and vowed the vow would have to say—even to love, even to sincere though blind and narrow affection—"Get thee behind me, Satan."

Such is the original setting of the saying. But like all Christ's sayings it touches a principle and is capable of universal application. In every age and in every variety of circumstance the soul has to reckon with the foes within.

You have to do it in the nation. In these last years a danger from without, a sinister and awful menace to our very existence, woke, at least for a time, our sense of community.

When life was threatened we suddenly became conscious how precious it was. When we were in danger of losing it we saw how sweet a thing was freedom ; something to be cherished, to be fought for, to be died for, to be preserved at any cost. Men offered their lives ; money was poured out like water ; class prejudices were transcended, animosities forgotten, lifelong habits changed. And in the common sacrifice we felt an uplift of the spirit and tasted joys, if we also knew anxieties and sorrows, to which our hearts had long been strangers.

All this because the enemy was thundering at the gates, and must be met and mastered if life was to be worth retaining. One thing, and one thing only, seemed to lie between us and happiness, the crushing of the external menace to life and liberty, the breaking of a tyranny which threatened to make existence unendurable. So we girded our loins and set our teeth to break the onslaught, to meet and master the invader. All would be well if only we could crush the foe, the foe from without, the enemy at the gates. That done, how gladly, taught by crucial experience, welded together by our fiery trials, would we turn our faces to higher things.

Well, it is done. The thing has happened ;

praise be to God and our heroic men who loved not their lives unto the death. Babylon has fallen, the tyrant kingdom has crumbled. The foe from without has been broken. With what result? Already the shallow-hearted are preparing to forget, and those who do not so easily forget either their mercies or their vows, find themselves listening with new understanding to the admonition and warning of their Lord: A man's foes shall be those of his own household.

For we did in a manner, during the dark days, realise that the nation was a kind of magnified household. A few short years ago to be British seemed to be a certificate of character, just as to be German was to bear the mark of the Beast. To be British: it was like a family bond. Nationally we felt more like a family in those tragic years than ever within living memory. But a hatred or even a danger in common is but a poor foundation on which to build anything that is enduring. Only love can stand the test of time and experience; love based on a common devotion to an ideal above and beyond self-interest. For that which at first seems in its call to a higher loyalty to disturb the family bond is, in the long last, its only true security. It is not devotion to an ideal that wrecks

homes, but the absence of all ideals; not religion, but worldliness that disintegrates and destroys. It is so for our little households, and it is so for the larger household, that wider family which in its inmost being a nation is, and which for a time in these last years our own nation seemed almost to become.

But we are discovering anew the old truth that only Christ can be the corner stone of the fabric, whether it be a home that is in question or a Church or a nation. For only Christ can give the ideals and the sympathies and the other-regarding instincts which can bind a heterogeneous human society—otherwise a mass of conflicting interests—into the cohesion and co-operation of a living organism. A community which puts self-interest in the place of Christ is doing itself and the world a poor service. Justice is a noble ideal, but nothing that is based on purely selfish motives can ever get within sight of justice. You need something more than the cry of more profits, on the one hand, or more wages, especially if it be for less work, on the other, to build a just state upon. You need a deeper loyalty, a wider vision, the sense of obligation to a higher will; the spirit which honours God in all human arrangements and sees something of God in every one who wears a human face.

And the feeling of kinship which comes with that is the only force which will drive out suspicion, uncharitableness and hate, the fell powers which wreck human society and are the true hindrances to the attainment of human good. For

“The crest and crowning of all good
Life’s final star is brotherhood.”

And

“Here lies the tragedy of our race:
Not that men are poor;
All men know something of poverty.
Not that men are wicked;
Who can claim to be good?
Not even that men are ignorant;
Who can boast that he is wise?
But that men are strangers.”

Strangers to each other’s inner lives and human interests and hopes, to the divine spark that is everywhere in all men’s bosoms. And while that is so we need not go seeking our troubles. They will find us surely enough and plague us bitterly enough, and in all our blind efforts after national union and reconstruction we shall learn only too well that our worst enemies are not at the gates but within the gates, that our most dangerous foes are those of our own household.

And what is true of the nation is true also of the Church. It is not anything outside of

her the Church has to fear: it is the more subtle foes that are within. Lack of loyalty to Christ and to one another: the spirit of the cynic and the fault-finder, of the petty gossip-monger, of the murmurer and complainer throwing the spume of his own smallness on the great things of Christ; oblivious all the while to that for which the Church stands, to the sacred trust of being a member of her, and to the deep, intimate spiritual happenings that constitute her real history in the sight of God and the rejoicing angels in heaven.

The costly timidities of the ecclesiastical diplomat, too, are among the foes within, and that rigid adherence to tradition which is sheer cowardice, playing for safety when the need of the hour is courage, the spirit which, whenever a soul afire with God would leap the barriers of moribund tradition or shock the conventional half-worldly notions of propriety, reaches out the restraining hand and affords but fresh proof that he who would truly follow Christ finds in his own household the foes of his highest life.⁷

And, finally, this word describes the battle which every sincere disciple of Christ must fight within the arena of his own breast. The flesh warreth against the spirit, and for most of us it is a weary climb to the heights where

there is heard "no yelp of the beast." The fox, the bear and the serpent are all represented in the menagerie which each of us carries "under his own hat." Only when he hears the summons to follow Christ does a man become fully aware what a divided family is housed in his own bosom. Only then does he understand how true it is that Christ came not to send peace, but a sword ; which does not mean that that is the intention of His gospel, but that it is its inevitable result in a human heart or in a society not yet under law to conscience. There is no escaping that, and only in one way can the blessed discomfort and unrest be honourably settled, by coming under the sway of one supreme love and devotion. Our lower loyalties must yield to the supreme loyalty. It is the one way of escape from the misery of the divided heart.

And here we have the key to our Lord's saying that no one can truly follow Him who does not put first the things of His cross and of His kingdom. It is not an arbitrary condition : it is not an unreasonable demand. It is not a declaration that for those who comply with it life will be dull and grey thereafter. The truth is otherwise. It is not loyalty to the highest, but disloyalty, that cuts the cords of joy. It is not by taking Christ's way that

we grow blind to the wonder and joy of the earth and to the entrancing interest of being alive. It is far otherwise :

"Heaven above is softer blue,
Earth around is sweeter green ;
Something lives in every hue,
Christless eyes have never seen."

You never are yourself until you love something more than self. You never get the gift of your own soul until you surrender it at the call of a supreme love. For then only are you delivered from the distraction of inward strife. Life is unified for you. The enemies within, the foes of your own household, are, by the only power they must acknowledge, brought into subjection.

VIII

Visible Hinderers

"He alone in our literature is the voice not merely of the social substratum, but even of the subconsciousness of the substratum. He utters the secret anger of the humble. He says what the uneducated only think, or even only feel about the educated."

G. K. CHESTERTON on Dickens.

"We sadly need a word which shall express the opposite of the word 'education,' a word to denote that turning-in of the mind upon itself, closing of doors upon speculation, hardening of mental tissue, which is the special vice of the so-called educated."

The Comments of Bagshot.

"I am told that Goethe defines genius as 'being a right appreciation of the situation,' i.e., I judge, a perfect sympathy. Here is the detector. Any touch of 'Stand off, I am holier, wiser, more refined, more respectable than thou,' is like a green precipitate which shows false culture somewhere: and it abounds."

Letters of James Smetham.

"It is because the spirit of the Old Testament says 'Go,' and the spirit of the New says 'Come,' that we know that God has been upon the earth."

The Shadow Christ.

VIII

Visible Hinderers

"But when the Scribes of the Pharisee sect saw Him eating with the sinners and the tax-gatherers, they said to His disciples . . . Jesus heard . . . and He said . . . I did not come to appeal to the righteous, but to sinners."—MARK ii. 16, 17 (Weymouth's translation).

IT is not easy to describe in a sentence the two types of Hebrew society which in the Gospels are named Scribe and Pharisee. They do not represent separate parties. The same individual might be both Pharisee and Scribe. But if one seeks to distinguish, perhaps the best way to do it briefly would be to say that the Scribes were the men of principle, and the Pharisees were the nationalists. The same man might be and indeed often was both. But viewed as a Scribe he was a man of rules and documents and religious principle. Regarded as a Pharisee he was not that alone, but also religiously a strict separatist and politically a keen and ardent nationalist.

Put thus, the case against the Scribe and Pharisee does not appear a very strong one.

"Men of principle," you say, "men who guide their lives by rules, are surely not, on that account, to be despised. And to be a keen nationalist, to think most of your own race, its history and distinctive testimony, to desire to keep it free from contamination with other and—as you believe—inferior races, to maintain its freedom and independence: all that surely is not a crime. It might almost pass as a definition of patriotism. If what you say is true, we have been doing these good men an injustice. They are not such bad fellows after all."

Well, that is just the point. They were not bad fellows. Certainly not in their own judgment; emphatically not in the judgment of their contemporaries. They were reckoned and, by the accepted standards, were not simply good men, but "the best" men in the nation: that is to say, the most respectable, the most highly educated and the most religious.

How, then, do they come to show so badly in the record? Why are they pilloried in the Gospels? Why were they the only people to make Jesus quite genuinely angry; He who was so full of love for everything human, who was so tender with the faults, and even with the grievous sins, of our poor humanity, who

sought to win all by His understanding love, who believed in the salvability even of the very worst?

The answer to these queries may be very briefly given, and it is worth giving. For it is a live question, full of present-day interest; since, under different names and with certain modifications due to a new stage of evolution and a changed mental climate, the Scribe and Pharisee are still alive and active in the world.

The reason why these good, well educated, influential men—men of principle and patriots—show so badly in the story, is simply that with all their advantages of culture, influence, position, and with their many good points, they were deficient in broad human sympathies. And from that defect certain things followed. One of these things was mental obtuseness. They could not see things, things plain enough to some other men and to a good many women who had not half their learning and who moved in a far lower stratum of society, that, for example, from which Jesus Himself came.

There are one or two phrases in the Gospels which are very significant, and which to any student of history and observer of human life have far more than a merely local reference.

Listen to this: "The common people heard Him gladly," or this, which was imagined to be conclusive and indeed annihilating: "Have any of the Pharisees believed on Him?" Or this, Christ's own wondering and adoring word: "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes!" Or this other word: "With what difficulty shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven." Or this—to take one example from the Apostles—"Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called."

What, think you, is the meaning of all that? What conclusion is to be drawn from it, or from this other fact, that of the early disciples and apostles—those who really count in the story—only one belonged to what we colloquially call "a good family," one of some wealth and standing; only one had a university education.

Does it mean—to take the last point first—that education is a mistake, a handicap, and not a help in things of the soul, in work that demands above everything enthusiasm, insight and love? Remembering Paul's record, we could scarcely say that, for he was easily first in energy and enthusiasm, labouring "more abundantly than they all," and by the con-

seeration of his learning and his mental gifts doing a work which no unlettered man could have done as well or, indeed, could have done at all.

Or are we to think that to be, as we say, "well-born," and to have command of the resources that belong to that, the influence that gives and the consideration, limits one's humanity and usefulness and power to render great service to one's kind? Surely there are too many examples to the contrary to admit of one drawing so absurd a conclusion. Other things being equal, these should all be helps and not hindrances to real power and usefulness.

What meaning, then, do you give to this fact, that in a supremely testing time—the hour of the Incarnation, when God, as it were, took the world unawares—that then—not for the first time in great crises and not for the last—humble and unlettered men, common men, came on the whole far better out of the test than the priests and the rulers, the cultured and the influential, all the people generally of whom it could be said that they were persons of consideration in society?

What does it mean? Abraham Lincoln said that God must think well of common men or He would not have made so many of

them. Thomas Carlyle was not a democrat, yet he had his moments of illumination. "Looking over the fertile fields of Holland, through which he was travelling, he once remarked to a friend that he saw instead of them the armies of suffering and toiling men who had perished with fevers and agues in forming the great dykes and canals which made all their present fertility," so wrote William Denny of Dumbarton, true captain of industry and stainless knight of the spirit.

The Scribe and Pharisee had not much use for common men. They had no true sense of what they and the world owed to them. They were there—these common men—to be directed and managed from above. The Scribe and Pharisee had a motto, "The people that know not the law are accursed"; the law being to them not what we mean by civil law, and not the embodied righteousness and mercy loved of the prophets, but a highly artificial and exclusive thing elaborated by generations of Rabbis and only to be obeyed or even understood by a select caste of superior persons like themselves.

Christ, of course, was "up against" all that. He believed in common men, gave them His best, spoke to the deepest in them. He did not believe in preference or privilege. To

quote William Denny once more, our Lord "clearly intends all ability and superiority to become servants, not dominators of the weaker elements in human society." That was Christ's way. He did not, indeed, speak much of the forms of human society. He was concerned chiefly with its spirit. A right spirit, a true ideal would, He knew, make in time its own appropriate forms. The great thing was to have the right spirit. And the spirit of the Scribe and Pharisee —the scornful spirit, the exclusive and selfish spirit, and above all the consciousness of superiority—was to Christ anathema. Education of the type represented by this caste was no help, but a positive hindrance to the understanding of any of the great human problems. No education is a help which neglects spiritual factors, which does not make a man more human, more tolerant, able to project himself by the power of sympathy into the standpoint of other men. And all education which breeds exclusiveness or scorn is worse than a failure, it is a calamity, a crime, the murder of a soul. Big things, the things that matter, are the exclusive property of no man and no class of men.

"All that hath been majestical
In life or death since time began
Is native in the simple heart of all."

So sang James Russell Lowell. And there are some words of another great American which show that in the realm of government he had got hold of the right idea. President Wilson, a few years ago, just about the time when America made her great decision, was contrasting two rival theories which have been in age-long conflict. One, of which the German Kaiser was the latest embodiment, is to this effect, that it is given to certain persons to be entrusted as trustees and guardians with the general government and direction of mankind. "I am one of those," said Mr. Wilson, "who reject the trustee theory, the guardianship theory. I never knew a man who knew how to take care of me, and reasoning that point out I conjecture that there isn't any man who knows how to take care of all the people of the United States. I suspect that the people of the United States understand their own interests better than any group of men in the confines of the country understand them."

Then he was led to say this, and it struck me so much that I preserved the cutting from which I quote now. "I feel nothing so much," said the President, "as the intensity of the common man. I can pick out in any audience the men who are at ease in their

fortunes : they are seeing a public man go through his stunts. But there are in every crowd other men who are not doing that—men who are listening as if they were waiting to hear if there were somebody who could speak the thing that is stirring in their own hearts and minds. It makes a man's heart ache," he went on, "to think he cannot be sure that he is doing it for them : to wonder whether they are longing for something he does not understand. He prays God that something will bring into his consciousness what is in theirs, so that the whole nation may feel at last released from its numbness, feel at last that there is no invisible force holding it back from its goal, feel at last that there is hope and confidence, and that the road may be trodden as if they were brothers shoulder to shoulder, not asking each other about difference of class, not contesting for any selfish advance, but united in the common enterprise."

There you have the true spirit, the reverence and humility that are an inseparable part of real greatness, belief that the divine Spirit moves in the depths of the human, speaks through the common heart, and that the most and the greatest any man can do is to take obstacles out of the way, help it to find true

and worthy expression in ideals and aims and achievements that will bind men in unity and marshal them as brothers moving together on the path to the goal whither it is in the purpose of God to lead them. It is not where I would go or where you would go, but where God would have us all go.

That is the hopeful way, the only worthy way, to the end of time. Not to look down from a height as a superman, but to recognise that the great things, the only abiding things, are the human things that lie deep in the common heart because God has put them there, and that the wisdom to build a commonwealth resides not in one brain alone, but in the united and pooled intelligence and insight of the whole.

The modern Scribe or Pharisee may curl his lip in scorn at that, but it is the truth all the same : the wisdom of Christ, the foolishness of God which is wiser than men. "I thank thee, Father, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes."

That, in the deep heart of it, is the difference between the Scribe and Pharisee of all time and Christ. Its special manifestation indicated in this passage, and still operative more or less consciously wherever you have

the Scribe and Pharisee spirit, was the separation, by these men, from their own narrow standpoint, of mankind into two well-defined divisions, saint and sinner. Christ would have none of that, and no more can we, if we have learned of Him. There is no such classification possible to man. There is an actual sinner in every saint and a possible saint in every sinner. Our own hearts should teach us that. We do know it unless we are altogether blinded by silly pride and egotism.

It is quite in the spirit of Christ that many of our own great novelists, poets and humanists, have taught us to see gleams of nobility and beauty in unlikely places. The war has taught us also how behind rough exteriors and even coarse language there may lie pure gold of heroism and unselfishness.

“Changed my view of human nature altogether,” said a youth to me the other night. And he told me how one of his comrades (“a rough, swearing chap I always thought him”), with a terribly shattered limb from which he died soon after, crawled to my friend (who was helpless and had to lie sixteen hours before the ambulance reached him) to adjust his headgear and save him from the stroke of the Mesopotamian sun. Then to another, to help stop his bleeding limb,

and finally to a young lad who was calling "Mother," and whom he comforted almost with a mother's gentleness.

No! the world is not divided as the Scribes and Pharisees divide it. And what hope have we any of us but this—which should give us pitying hearts and bowels of mercy for all that wear a human face—that they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick, and that Jesus Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

If only we could feel that, how it would kill all sense of superiority in us, give us human hearts, and draw us and all men nearer to each other and to God. How much more easily the new world would be built and all our problems solved, if we could but look out on life in that spirit!

IX

Invisible Helpers

“Not where the wheeling systems darken,
And our benumbed conceiving soars !
The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

The angels keep their ancient places ;
Turn but a stone, and start a wing,
'Tis ye, 'tis your estranged faces,
That miss the many-splendoured thing.”

FRANCIS THOMPSON.

“I believe the dead live close to the living, invisible, but present, and perhaps it is they whom God sends to us, in answer to our prayers, so that their spirit, which is His, may guide us and inspire us.”

A Young Soldier of France.

(Alfred Eugène Casalis, who fell on the field of honour, 9th May 1915, aged 19 years.)

IX

Invisible Helpers

A MERRY group sat round the smoking-room fire. There was much fun, repartee and laughter. In the centre of it all, the gayest of the gay and pouring out reminiscences of his professional life, sat an elderly Glasgow doctor. Suddenly, as sometimes happens in such circumstances, the conversation, influenced by a chance remark, struck a graver note. And arising out of the remark—which had to do with the possibility of communication with friends in the spirit world—some one, an Edinburgh medical consultant, if my memory serves me, said, turning to the elder man, “What do *you* think of that doctor?” “Well,” said the old physician, “I won’t say that I believe everything that happens to be within the boards of the Bible, but I had a good father and mother who taught me by precept and example to reverence its pages. And there is one text I do believe, and

always have believed, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. i. 14.)

I wonder if we could say, like the old doctor, *there* is one text at least which I believe with all my heart.

Is the ministry of angels part of our living and working faith? Have we a place for the unseen helpers in our cosmogony? We have not, it may be, thought much about it, or indeed considered it worth thinking about. What need have we, after all, of angels or any high spiritual beings other than the supreme Spirit, if we believe that He is in living contact with our spirits? If we can say with Tennyson :

"Speak to Him thou for He hears, and spirit with
spirit can meet,
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than
hands and feet,"

what else and what more can we want? In Him we live and move and have our being, and His ear is not heavy that it cannot hear, nor His arm shortened that it cannot save.

Yes, but is there not truth in what a helpful woman said to one in trouble who thought herself forgotten of God, "Dear, I am His hand." God may and often does use us to

answer one another's prayers. Have you never had some one say to you, or have you never yourself said to some one who appeared opportunely, in a moment of need, "Surely God sent you to me"? Do not nearly all our earthly blessings come through some intermediary? And as with the common gifts—food, clothing, shelter—so also with the higher gifts. "God uses us to help each so, lending our minds out." Knowledge finds us for the most part through books, teachers and intercourse with other minds. It goes without saying that social interests and affections are mediated and made possible by the lives of others. Parents, teachers in divine things, those we love or whose goodness we revere, are our friends and aiders in the things of the spirit; channels of the divine grace to our hearts. And if that be true of God's method with us when His ways are visible and can be clearly traced, why not, of what lies beyond our ken?

Who shall say that we are not often helped by other and higher beings, watched, guided and blessed by them, warned too, and, it may be, protected, in hours of danger. God needs human messengers to do His errands. But He may have other messengers too. We may have more friends than we know: more

helpers than we recognise. It may be simple and literal truth to say, "He giveth His angels charge over thee."

Sir Ernest Shackleton during his trials in the Antarctic had a strange haunting sense "that the party was four, not three." As he wrote afterwards in a London newspaper: "At times the feeling was so strong with me that I would turn expecting to find a phantom person by my side." And there was one occasion when, his small party roped together and marching through fog and darkness, "something inexplicable" caused him to stay his feet. A moment later the moon, shining through the lifting fog, revealed "a great gaping hole that would have swallowed a division." "Probably it is," he adds, "that ten months' comradeship with death gives one a sixth sense." These "stops in the mind" are well-known experiences, and it may easily be that the loss of something like a sixth sense is one of the penalties we pay for material progress, and one of the reasons why we fail to recognise what seemed to be plain enough to some of our brothers and sisters of an earlier day.

In any case no candid reader of the Bible can fail to be aware that the fact of angel ministries is assumed and even explicitly

taught in it page after page, from Genesis to Revelation. Patriarchs and statesmen, so we read, reached decisions, initiated reforms, shaped social and national movements through the guidance and suggestion of messengers from the world of spirit. Prophets and seers were inspired, our glorious Lord Himself was comforted by angelic ministrants. Legions of these high helpers He could have had, He said, had He asked them of His Father. At the temptation, in the garden, with Him who was never alone because the Father Himself was with Him, the heavenly helpers appear. At the empty tomb, at the mysterious "going up," the records tell of heavenly visitants; and in the New Testament, at least, it is nowhere suggested that the angels are near because God is far. If the angels, as some scholars surmise, were "made in Babylon" or born of Zoroastrian dualism, they show little trace of it here; although such an origin would no more discredit their real existence than the genesis of the idea of an after life in the dreams of a savage would discredit the fact of immortality. It may be permitted us to believe that the angels were only "made" in Babylon or Persia because God made them first, and that their dim adumbrations in these lands, as elsewhere, are shadows

thrown by the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Let us face the fact—either there are angels or there are not. If there are not, it occurs to one that the first humans who entered the unseen must have passed into a lonely and companionless world. Also our Bible badly wants editing. One would have to take the sacrilegious blue pencil or the remorseless shears and delete from the sacred record much that has stirred the imagination and comforted the human heart in all the generations. I fear I am like the old doctor, too reverent of the book and its associations to treat its great story after that fashion, and prefer with seer and patriot in the Old Testament, with our Lord and His apostles in the New, and with the crooning mothers and their little children, to keep the angels.

And not, as I believe, altogether without some ground in reason. To recognise that there may be more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in some philosophies, seems to be only decent intellectual humility in beings like ourselves, conscious as we are, and cannot fail to be, of so great a penumbra of shadow encircling our little shining disc of ascertained and provable knowledge.

But it was not really of the angels I set out to speak. Nor was it of the angels only the

old doctor was thinking when he quoted his text so reverently. No one ventured to say to him that, beautiful and apt as the quotation was, it was nevertheless, in a sense, not strictly relevant to the question under discussion; which was not the existence or ministry of angels, but the power of our own dear folk in the Unseen to be near and to help us.

And yet *is* the quotation—when you think of it—even in that connection so irrelevant after all? Is such an extension of its meaning inherently improbable? There are very many in the world, unseen, who love us. They—as we must believe—keep their old interest in those they have left behind. They do not “change to us, although they change.” And when we think of them, as we do so often, quite naturally, and indeed inevitably, the question arises: Are not they also ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who are not yet come into the full inheritance? And if they minister to any, why not to their own? Who so fit for such a ministry as they who know us and understand us so well, and whose love can divine what we are feeling? If—to use our poor earth-bound language—God delegates such work, why not to them? To whom would it give

such joy since they have so many tender and sacred ties with us, so many memories in common, so many reasons for wishing to help us?

I frankly confess—if I may here step aside a moment—my inability to comprehend the anxiety of so many honoured teachers in the Church to close the avenues between the seen and the unseen, or to foreclose the question of the possibility of intercourse between them. In the case of those who accept the happenings on the Mount of Transfiguration at their face value, such foreclosure seems strangely inconsistent. The hypothesis that “spiritualistic” phenomena are the work of evil spirits *alone* is worse than inconsistent. It is a monstrous libel on God. What kind of God would He be who left the road open to *the evil*, and shut out with an impenetrable barrier *the good*? More worthy of respect is the attitude of reserve of judgment on such matters in view of our still defective knowledge of the working of the unconscious mind. Certainly neither the prevalence of imposture, nor the unsettling effect on unbalanced minds, can be conclusive for those who remember that both these things are not unknown in connection with our own holy religion. New movements need time to justify themselves,

and to shake themselves free of irrelevant and unworthy accretions. Thoughtful Christians who look back on the eschatological teaching of even a generation, must feel that only the mercy of God or the lack of imagination could have prevented the folk who held such views from all going mad together. And let our teachers not forget that the phenomena of spiritualism, even if proved, are in no way opposed to Christianity. They *are* to materialism, which, if such phenomena are verified, tumbles like a house of cards about the ears of its votaries. Also "spiritualism" is not only not a new religion : it is not a religion at all. It does not cover the breadth of man's life, or meet the daily needs of the aspiring soul. It only furnishes—should it eventually prove itself—a new fact to be assimilated and given its proper place in the perspective of our faith. If the fact *is* a fact, our holy faith has room for it, and will be able to assimilate and purify and use it, as it has done so many other facts which the Church, in the person of its ecclesiastics and teachers, once mistakenly opposed. Patience, sympathetic comprehension, the open mind, are valuable qualities, and never yet harmed the cause of truth.

All that apart, I cannot help thinking that

our Lord's words to His sorrowing disciples have a far wider meaning than we sometimes suppose, and that He was, in some sort, enunciating a law, which holds wherever there is love strong enough to make it operate, when He said, "I will not leave you comfortless"—"I will come to you"—"A little while, and ye shall see Me; because I go to the Father."

How rich, how credible, how comforting it all is, if in this instance, as so often, Christ is only using the common path, the appointed way, and making it beautiful with His use of it; and if, true uniquely of Him, these sayings are also, in some real way, true of our own who are so dear to us. Of them, too, may it not be said that they do not leave us comfortless. That they suggest good thoughts to us, turn our minds to sources of comfort, strengthen and console us. That so they give us the power of going on that we faint not nor fail.

These are very intimate, very sacred things. But not things to be altogether silent about, since we have great reason to be interested in them. Least of all to be silent about when we gather in the Place of Prayer, and our hearts grow tender and responsive to the divine realities, the precious mysteries that

wrap us round, as we say, "Surely this is the House of God, surely this is the Gate of Heaven"; so making our own that wondering and awestruck cry of one sad and lonely man who, long centuries ago in a dream of the night, saw a mystic stairway span the void, and messengers from a higher world ascending and descending thereon. Our affections, in God's plan for us, are our best spiritual teachers. Heaven is where our loved ones are. In the hour when, and in the place where, we grow conscious of them, then and there shines for us the portal of the heavenly mystery, the very gate of heaven. And if, indeed, there be a stairway for spirit feet to tread, we may be sure that they use it, and use it for those who love them, and whom they never cease to love.

And if, as the Bible tells, decisions of great moment in the far past were suggested, inspired and guided by angel ministries, may not similar decisions—even if we are less conscious of it—be similarly influenced now? Enriched as it has been in these recent years by the presence of so many fine souls in the heyday and youthful spring of their energies, may the unseen not be more than ever a factor in the shaping of the things

we see and know. Were the armies of the seen the only combatants in the fight which swung so suddenly—as it seemed to us—into the full tide of triumph? The League of Nations is as yet a far from perfect instrument. But the marvel is that, with so many men round the table whose mental habitude is still of the dark ages, the instrument is there at all. Were the statesmen who nevertheless found themselves so wonderfully agreed about fundamentals in the shaping of it, the only arbiters and guides of their decisions? Or could another prophet like one of old not have said, “Lord, open their eyes that they may see” the hidden forces, the viewless chivalry of God.

Are we indeed alone? May not the deathless souls of the departed be on active service still in ways our veiled eyes may not clearly see, but which our hearts in sensitive moments may at least dimly apprehend. And may not the soldier’s puzzle—why so many of the fine chaps go—not receive the answer, Because the Lord had need of them. Because not their undying memory only—a part now of the deathless, human story—but their actual faculty is a potent element in the spiritual uplift which shall yet carry us past all obstructions and over seemingly insuperable

difficulties to the spiritual goal towards which we strive.

The thought is one capable of many applications. It gives the law of the conservation of energy a new orientation. It links to the chariot of progress the powers and energies of all the unseen, holy dead, alive unto God and His glorious purposes for ever. And it gives a new and nobly satisfying answer to the too little believing and understanding question, Wherefore this waste? What if there be no waste, not one tiny atom but is gloriously conserved and magnificently used?

Here, surely, is something to think about, to pray about, to thank God for. "They without us are not made perfect." No, nor we without them; the comrades who have climbed ahead, our helpers and the world's. Are they not *all* ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be the heirs of God's wonderful salvation?

X

The Life Beyond

"From out our crowded Calendar
One day we pluck to give ;
It is the day the dying pause
To honour those who live."

M'LANDBURGH WILSON,
in the *Atlantic Monthly*.

X

The Life Beyond

"He is not a God of the dead, but of the living : for all live unto Him."—LUKE xx. 38.

I WISH to speak to-day of the future life, of "the comrades who have climbed ahead," these friends of ours "who live in God." For that, Jesus Himself being witness, is how we should regard them. "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living : for all live unto Him."

I dislike the word "Dead." It is a foolish word, and ought to be banished from the Christian vocabulary. Those who have gone on are not dead. And the world of their new activities is not a void and empty region. It is a land peopled with our friends. All of them alive, thinking, willing and loving; all busy with glorious services and high activities. They have taken with them all their powers and faculties: those personalities, for the making of which this lower

world exists, only released now from the disabilities and hindrances of the purely physical body : the harp on which they played until they got a better instrument. Otherwise they are not greatly changed. They keep, as Jesus did, the qualities that distinguished them down here. And every bit of their true human nature has now, we must believe, more than ever its natural and legitimate exercise.

Katharine Tynan wrote in one of her war poems :

"Now heaven is by the young invaded,
Their laughter's in the House of God."

Their *laughter*? To be sure ; they have not lost that—why should they? or anything else that made them attractive to us. They are having the time of their lives, and we dare not be so selfish as to grudge it to them.

We know, and from the nature of the case can know, nothing in detail about the circumstances and conditions of the new life. Nobody but a quack would pretend to know, or would even desire unduly to break the protective covering of holy reticence that surrounds their doings. But we can, at least, keep our common sense and make some use of what we already know about the God with whom and in relation to whom they live. And it is that same God who made little

children, with their insatiable curiosity and their merry hearts, and through His glorious Son, said of these same little children, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." From that same God came *this* various world with its beauty and glory, and it is surely not an unreasonable deduction from what we have seen that the new life will not be inferior to this in its possibilities of joyous activity, the happiness of powers and faculties in noblest exercise.

For the rest: Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things God hath laid up for them that love Him.

A phrase from Maeterlinck's play, *The Blue Bird*, always remains in my memory. The children, under the guidance of the fairy in the search for happiness, are able to talk with their old grandparents who had passed away from the earth. And one of the children says wonderingly to the old folk, "So you are not dead?" "Dead," they answer, "what does that mean?" "Oh, it means that you are no longer alive!" To which the reply comes, "How silly! The living are so stupid when they think of The Others."

Maeterlinck is right. We are often so stupid when we think of them. How they

must smile at us, and also at their own former thoughts about it all.

The "eternal Sabbath day," for instance. The picture of the high-backed pew and the eternal psalm-singing. I do wish we had an adequate hymn about heaven ; or at least, for none can be adequate, that we had some hymns less inadequate ; some image or mental picture of that great existence which did not make a ludicrous caricature of the glorious doings of that beloved community.

Certainly no one symbol would be adequate. Worship—when the heart is awake—is a glorious thing. The Sabbath is a noble boon to our tired, toiling humanity. Music is one of the most natural symbols of ecstasy. But an existence made up of any one of them alone would be "appallingly tedious," and one can sympathise with the writer who says, "To beings constituted as we are, the monotony of singing psalms would be as great an affliction as the pains of hell, and might even be pleasantly interrupted by them."

Such ways of conceiving the future are entirely unworthy. To think of it as unending rest may be excusable as the utterance of a mood, as when the over-worked washerwoman said exultantly, "I'm going to do nothin' for ever and ever." But doing nothing would be

even worse than perpetual psalm-singing. The sentiment, "Now the labourer's task is o'er," is only permissible when you confine your thoughts to definite acts and services performed under conditions of time and sense. When you let your mind rise higher you know that the nobler tasks are not o'er; they are only beginning. "Are they not all ministering spirits?" and sharers in the divine interest and activity which does not watch only, but helps and inspires the evolution in human personalities of God's great purposes. And that not for this little earth only, it may be, but for other worlds than we mortals know. The great thing is that they live and grow and find scope for every power and faculty of their being. To think less than that about them would be to furnish another illustration of the foolishness of which Maeterlinck speaks: "The living are so stupid when they think of The Others."

I have been ranging these last days through the literature of this subject, reading whatever I could find on the difficulties of belief in the hereafter, and the exercise has not in the least depressed me. It has left me simply "prancing" with faith. For there is not an argument that really touches the essential point, not one. [Not the argument from the

relation of mental activities to physical structure. For everything that can be said about that is equally compatible with the theory that the brain does not create the mind but is only the instrument on which for a time the mind is playing.⁷⁸ Not the argument from appearances which for most men is the greatest difficulty. It looks so like an end. But "things are not what they seem." To the uninstructed, modern theories of the nature of matter sound more impossible than the most grotesque of fairy tales. To reduce this seeming gross and palpable substance to "something of the tenuity of thought itself"; to tell me that what I call solid is made so by incredible velocity of movement! that seems to mock my common sense. Yet the fact is even so. Modern science has marched to all its victories with this strange device emblazoned on its banners: "By faith we *disbelieve* the evidence of our senses." To judge by the testimony of the senses is to negative every important advance that science has made. Of physical science no less than of spiritual is it true that a man must walk, not by sight, but by insight. It is by correction of sense impressions by intelligence, that we win all our knowledge.

And as for the fine sentiments by which

men and women (great souls like John Morley or George Eliot, *e.g.*) have comforted themselves, that what the individual man has done goes to enrich the race although he has perished, what does that amount to? For this earth is a time structure and will some day come to an end; the race will have perished then with the individuals. There will be nothing to show that it has ever been. The whole age-long process that has built up personalities, thought and love and heroism and sacrifice, what will it amount to? a gleam of fireworks, a momentary flame, and then the unending night. And if it be said that the value of it all has passed into the Infinite Spirit, that the Unseen Universe is the better and richer for it, one has to ask, What Unseen Universe? For what has been built at infinite cost is personality, and if that goes what is left?

It is sheer confusion of thought to compare man's life and God's to the waves that lose their individuality in the sea. Personal qualities are not transferable. They cannot be handed over like physical entities: they are achievements in the soul, and perish with it. And if it be said that Justice endures and is eternal, the obvious answer is, "Justice to what and to whom?" Justice has no meaning

apart from personality—you must be just to something or to somebody. If you evacuate existence of living personalities, of Jesus Christ and all He stands for, you make the Infinite Spirit a nullity. All that is left—if even that—is the thought of a lone Spirit you call God who first makes a house for living beings, plays with them for a few millions of years, snuffs them out, generation after generation, and ends by burning the house He built for them. The thing is incredible as a theory of life and existence! Every instinct rebels against it, has always and in all ages rebelled against it, and never more than now. The higher man rises the surer he grows that life means something, that something is eternally gained for the universe by the struggle. And *that cannot be* unless personality endures.

We come back when we have ranged over the age-long discussion to the words of Jesus, so quiet, so sure, and falling on the perturbed spirit like soft music, like sunlight, like healing, like melodies of home and love and rest. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you." God is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live unto

Him. *That* satisfies the mind. And that brings peace and assurance to the heart. Never fear. They live. Live with all their gains conserved, and we too shall live.

My faith goes farther than that. I believe in the "Communion of Saints." I believe that "God is love," and that the love that has been begotten in our hearts to our own dear folks is as immortal as God Himself and will be our joy for ever as it is now.

I believe that even now these dear ones who have gone before us are near us and are permitted to be of service to us. That by some finer mental telepathy they can suggest thoughts that help us. That all of good we do helps them, and that our remembrance of them before God helps them too, adds a sweetness as of home and love to the great life they are living now.

So we are even now together, made one by love and mutually helpful.

I began by desiderating a worthy hymn of heaven. Let me quote in closing a short poem written by a friend of my own whose son gave his young life for the world's saving in Flanders' field. It is not a hymn. But it is a fruit of the insight which is sometimes given in moments of deep and tender emotion, and it comes as near as anything I know to a

worthy conception of the life to which so many fine souls have gone in these last years in the full flush of their young manhood.

TO ANY FATHER

[
“Say not the boy is dead, but rather say
He’s but a little farther on the way,
Impatient sooner to behold the view—
At the next turning you may see it too.
Say he’s a child again, early to bed,
On night’s soft pillow fain to lay his head.
Say he is off to track the mountain stream,
And lingers by the side in boyish dream.
Say by immortal waters now at rest,
He clasps a thousand memories to his breast.
Say to his wondering quests wise angels, smiling,
Tell the true story of the world’s beguiling.
Say on heroic task his soul is thrilling,
Where noble dream hath noble deeds fulfilling.
Say that he feasts with comrades tried and true,
But in his heart the banquet waits for you.
Say in the Presence, at a gentle word
He shows the wound-marks to his wounded Lord.
Say never he is dead, but rather say,
He’s but a little farther on the way.”

]

D. D. B.

XI

**The Joyous Mystery of the
“Going Up”**

“Then began every Knight to behold other, and either saw other
by their seeming fairer than ever they saw afore.”

Le Morte d'Arthur.

XI

The Joyous Mystery of the “Going Up”

TO-DAY in the Church's Calendar is the Sunday after Ascension. Here (Luke xxiv. 51-53) we have the account of that event compiled by Luke the beloved physician. It is given, necessarily, in terms of the old astronomy by men for whom heaven was somewhere overhead. “He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight”; so Luke gives it in his history. And here, very simply and beautifully: “It came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.”

The forty days since the Resurrection—full of wonder and mystery—were a kind of mount of transfiguration. Like that brief unveiling of the mystery which enspheres us always, although hidden by the dulness and limitation of our bodily sense, it had to come to an end somehow. And it was thus it ended. The disciples' last glimpse of the glorified body of

their Lord was of spirit-hands upraised to bless. So He vanished from their view. *Then, overwhelmed with grief and smitten with a sense of irreparable loss, they returned heart-broken to their homes!* Nay: Luke's investigations yield a very different result. "They worshipped Him," he says, "and returned to Jerusalem with great joy." Why? Because they had seen beyond the veil. Because they had recognised their Divine Comrade as surely now in the "spiritual body" as formerly in the natural, in His robe of "immortality" as in His garment of flesh. The Beyond was home-like now; the Unseen universe informed with an Infinite Love and Friendliness.

New W. The cloud received Him. But that did not quench their joy, rather it heightened it. For they loved Him, and rejoiced that He had gone to His Father and their Father, to His God and their God. All they could not see became radiant with the sense of Christ's presence in it. Joy flowed in ocean fulness on their souls, the joy that never comes to any of us poor humans, save when we claim our heritage beyond the stars and call in the New World to redress the balance of the old. If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable. But if our hope in Him is planted beyond all our eyes can see or our hearts imagine, we—like those

first Christian men—rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

That is the good news of the Ascension, the gospel of the going up.

But it is useless to deny that the fact of the Ascension has its difficulties. These, I am persuaded, are all of them difficulties for the imagination rather than for the reason, and the following way of looking at the whole matter may help others as it has helped me.

We live here and now in a world of three dimensions. All material things—the objects around us—our own bodies—are viewed under the categories of length, breadth and thickness. But men of science and philosophers assure us that they can conceive a world of four dimensions. I am not mathematician enough to follow, much less to explain the process by which they arrive at that conception. But arrive at it they do. The late Professor Chrystal used to tell his students that the ways in which matter would behave in a fourth dimensional world had all been worked out mathematically; a wonderful tribute, he held, to the reach and power of human intelligence.

Well, we plain-folks may be unable to soar to these heights. But we can imagine a world of two dimensions of which the following may serve for an imperfect picture:

A few mornings ago a beam of light, length and breadth without thickness, was streaming in at your eastern window. As you lay watching, tiny motes darted in and out, visible a moment in the broad band of sunlight, then disappearing. They were visible only in the sunbeam. As soon as they passed into the third dimension—into depth or height—unirradiated by the sunlight, then, as far as mere sense could tell you, they were gone, had vanished, ceased to be.

And yet you knew that was only optical illusion. For you had the conception of the third dimension, and experience of it as well. The dust particles were there although for the moment you could no longer see them.

Apply the illustration—imperfect as all illustrations must be—to the fact of Ascension. Think of the fourth dimension of the scientific thinkers; an aspect of reality hidden because of the imperfection and limitation of our optical apparatus: a plane or sphere of existence real but invisible to our bodily sense. Then let your thoughts rest on the New Testament conception of the glorified body of Christ. A "spiritual body"—doubtless Paul derived his conception from Christ's post-resurrection appearances—a body not keyed to a world of three dimensions only, but capable of living in a fourth: becoming visible intermittently to

the first disciples, as the motes in the sunlight did to you, and then when it passed beyond that belt of light into the fourth dimension—as your motes did into the third—visible no longer.

"He was carried up into heaven." So they put it in the only language available to them in their day. Thus they interpret the evidence of their senses. But who shall say that heaven is "up," or who shall say that heaven is "far"? It is life on another plane: that is all we know. A world of reality, perhaps all about us, but hidden by the veil of sense. A world as far above our imagining in any definite picture as the mathematician's concept of the fourth dimension, yet real, glorious beyond all telling in its possibilities for living souls.

You can *think* the thing although you may not be able to *picture* it. And the moment you think it, all your prosaic, three dimensional, astronomical objections are blown into the air. The earth revolves on its axis, and "up" now is "down," at another stage of the revolution. Then where is heaven? The reasonable answer is that heaven is a condition and a place because of a condition. Not a three dimensional world keyed to our present imperfect organs of perfection, but a world keyed to the kind of body made visible

to those first Christians in the sun-belt of their great experiences, the body of the risen Christ. He is the first-fruits—not in time but in visible evidence—of all the harvest. For it is not the discarded body with which the spirit clothes itself but the prepared body, not the natural body but the spiritual body, a body plastic to spirit and relating spirit to spirit in such fashion as to make recognition and communion possible. Christ, for evidential purpose, was able to project His changed body into the lower plane for a time. But that was not its native environment. So it was withdrawn to function more vitally and, for us, more fruitfully in its own plane.

Luke goes on to tell us of some immediate consequences of this withdrawal. He notes that when the Unseen World received their Lord, three things happened to the first disciples. That they are relevant and significant things is just what we expect of Luke. He has a way of selecting such things, noting the salient points; the quality of a good physician accustomed to distinguish almost at a glance the significant symptoms from the mass of irrelevant detail which his patient pours into his ear. The significant things here are three. First, the disciples worshipped their vanished Lord. Second, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy. Third, they drew

together in fellowship, were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.]

(1) *They worshipped Him.* That was the first result, and we can see how natural it was and how inevitable. He had been so much the comrade and friend that it was difficult to realise He was so much more. True, the Resurrection brought it home to them. But even in these forty days of intermittent intercourse He was so much the same Jesus; there was—and let us thank God for it—so much of the old thoughtfulness and kindness that they were already losing the awe and wonder, the sense of the infinity and magnitude of His personality and of the relation He was to stand in not only to them, but to the whole world. But with the Ascension all that came back to them. They understood, and understanding, they worshipped. Which does not mean that the old familiarity became less dear to them, but that it was filled now with infinite meaning, with height, and depth, and atmosphere. And that meant that they thought of Christ far more adequately and far more spiritually. It was a precious memory that in the glory of His new life He had kindled a fire on the shore to give them welcome after a night of toil. They knew He was still thoughtful of their common needs. But they and all men had deeper needs.

They needed love, purity, immortality, God. And His vanishing into the Unseen brought these things near, made them supreme, lifted their thoughts and affections to the undying things of the Spirit for which all the rest of life is but the scaffolding and preparation.

The second significant detail is that *they returned to Jerusalem with great joy*. They took the uplift and happiness of their new realisation of the Unseen, their new sense of the wonder of Christ, back with them to fill the common task with meaning, the daily life with an infinite and eternal significance. And that is what happens always when the mystery and glory of Christ become the dominant fact with any of us, and the future shines in His revealing light. All life is lifted by it, becomes more wonderful and more inspiring. And let us remember that life ceases to inspire when it ceases to be wonderful. As Professor Arthur Thomson says, "The sense of wonder is one of the saving graces of life, and he who is without it might as well be dead." John Smith, of Harrow, advised a certain lady to teach her sons three things: to speak the truth, to love their mother, and to *believe in the future life*. Why the last? Because it keeps wonder alive. Because it fills all life with significance, makes every activity a sacred thing, every day a portion of the

eternal, a romance, an adventure, lifting the soul above all mean satisfactions into the joy that flows newly for every live spirit from the eternal fountains. The joyous mystery of the "going up" lies nearer to the making of the new world than we think. It was the prelude to the most wonderful outflow of moral energy this old earth has ever known. It is uplift, background, hope men need to-day more than anything else. And the good news of the "going up" can supply this for the twentieth century as it did for the first.]

31) The third significant thing in the experience of these witnesses of the Ascension was the *new interest it gave them in one another and in the common worship.* Their eyes were opened. They saw one another newly; as heirs of immortality, comrades in an adventure reaching beyond the boundaries of time and sense, sharers in an experience which filled their small commonplace lives with glory and with dignity. "Your brother whom you have seen," who living to-day may die to-morrow and mount high above you, "walking in an air of glory whose light does trample on your days," how can you look upon him with anything but love, how be anything but kind to him?)

<It is our practical materialism that breeds antagonism and ignoble animosity. When

we realise ourselves as fellow immortals we change the whole social climate. Meanness becomes impossible. A halo hallows every human. You look into the eyes of an undying spirit. You touch the hand of an immortal. The sacredness death gives to the beloved who have gone on shines also in the faces of the beloved who are here. And against the background of eternity worship becomes a new thing; in hymn, prayer, page of the evangel, spoken message, soul is calling to soul, and God through all is wooing us to the ecstasy of adoration to possess our possessions, to know what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we are called to be His sons, heirs of God—think of it—and joint-heirs with Christ.

Terrors may press, temptations assail, doubts arise, and shadows fall. But always this dark world gets its light from that other where Christ is, and to which this is the doorway and vestibule. We shall never be overwhelmed or forsaken if that is sure to us. The good news of the "going up" enters as an element into all life. It keeps the soul alive because it keeps wonder alive, worship too, and joy and brotherhood, in the glad mystery of what we are and are to be. What that is in its fulness we know not yet. But it will be a glad surprise, well worth dying to find out.

XII

The Holiness of Beauty

“Clover and trefoil,
All in an earthen bowl—
How these little things
Master the soul.”

M. ST. CLARE BYRNE.

“ Pictures on the wall and flowers in the window, gymnastics and music, may not really distract the attention more than uncomfortable seats and bad ventilation.”

HENRY VAN DYKE, on School Hygiene in
The Spirit of America.

“ Religion is the highest form of life ; and art and religion have in the past been true yoke-fellows, and shall be the same again.”

J. CROUCH, *Puritanism and Art.*

XII

The Holiness of Beauty

"The gate of the temple which is called Beautiful"—ACTS iii. 2.

By their nature as individuals and their association in communities, men are impelled to seek after four things, the Good, the True, the Beautiful and the Useful.

All are necessary for a full life, and all are honourable. Take the last first.

A critic once described William Morris as "a poetical upholsterer"; about which Morris said: I suppose he means "by this simple statement of facts to convey an insult." To-day that kind of insult has lost its sting. In like fashion Napoleon meant to convey an insult when over the Channel he dare not cross he flung his taunt about a nation of shopkeepers. But the nation of shopkeepers has in these last years—desisting a little from its ordinary avocations—put bigger battalions than Napoleon's in their place, and, in that heroic interlude, has not only answered the

swashbuckler, but, incidentally, the snob as well. For it has shown how absolutely dependent we and all men are on the common and honourable services of those who produce and those who distribute the things that belong to man's material life. But there is little need to labour that point. This grain of truth there is in Napoleon's epithet, that we in these islands are not in any real danger of neglecting the useful.

Nor, bad as we are sometimes told we are, can we be accused of altogether neglecting the Good. If we have no St. Francis we have a St. Knox, a St. Nightingale, a St. Booth and a St. Slessor, quite fit to rank with Francis or any of the saints of mediæval catholic Europe. And if we cannot claim that the Good is consciously the aim of the multitude, yet the multitude turn their faces to it wherever it is incarnate, as to a light on a hill. Calvary is still a beacon for human shipwrecks. The worst the bad can do to the Good, in this or any age, is to sneer at it, and a sneer is an admission of the better. You cannot really kill the Good: it triumphs even in death. Once seen it haunts like an apparition: it incarnates itself in the awakened conscience: it marshals the ranks of the living to its viewless banner. John Brown's soul from out

of John Brown's murdered body goes marching on to the abolition of slavery. The idols of the market-place may often draw men away from a better allegiance, but we all know, in the depth of us, that one thing is needful. Every mother knows it when her children are round her knees, every father among his boys. So we ask our children to be good. It is their very first lesson. The alphabet of morality comes even earlier than that of the primary school.

And the True! That also is fundamental in the individual and in human society. No community ever yet existed or tried to exist or could exist solely on a basis of lies. People may speak of a society or a government as an organised hypocrisy ; but there must be honour even among thieves, or the gang goes to pieces. The best tribute we, as a nation, have from all the world is the saying about the Englishman's word. And it is significant that our greatest English writer should say :

"To thine own self be true,
Thou can't not then be false to any man."

Now the pursuit of the Useful is pursuit of the obvious ; it is for material ends. The pursuit of the Good and the True although less obvious is equally a human need, for it is

of man's nature, his higher nature, the spiritual, not the material. Without it the real well-being of either individual or nation is impossible. But the Beautiful is also necessary. It meets a deep elemental need. Without beauty there is no true health or wholeness for the kind of being man is.

Blindness to that fact is perhaps our great national sin. Many sermons have been preached on the beauty of holiness. I have never heard of one on the holiness of beauty, but picking up my Ruskin the other day I read this: "Of all God's gifts to the sight of man, colour is the holiest, the most divine, the most solemn." And yet how we in Scotland have shrunk from beauty in connection with worship, almost feared it, whether in the painter's art or in great music.

There is, of course, a reason for that, as well as many excuses. Ignoring the excuses, let us for a moment consider the reason. This, namely, that, standing between the moral ideals of truth and goodness and the material ideal of the useful, beauty has a sensuous as well as a spiritual appeal, and its devotees, both within and without the Church, have often been more responsive to the lower appeal than to the higher. The natural man shirking the higher demand of the moral struggle after

goodness and truth, has found a certain relief to the spiritual part of him in yielding to the emotion of the beautiful. In the days when the Church was corrupt the sensuous appeal of the beautiful remained in art and music and stately ceremonial, while the spiritual appeal, the call to goodness and truth, was neglected. Hence the revolt, the honourable and justifiable revolt of sterner souls who, in condemning, forgot beauty's other and spiritual side, and in banning the gratification of the senses failed to reflect that even man's senses are divinely given and meant to be gratified as well as controlled.

Our own spiritual forefathers, to whom we owe so much, are not without their share of blame for the cult of ugliness in things ecclesiastical, the naked bareness of so many of the buildings dedicated to Him who makes all His own handiwork beautiful, the God of the rose and the lily, of form and light and colour. Calvinism, Presbyterianism, the Shorter Catechism, Cromwell and his Roundheads, the Covenanters had much to say about goodness and truth, but little or nothing about beauty.

Now, we are not saved by beauty, but life is enriched by it and impoverished without it. And in most souls there is a sleeping artist or poet for whom beauty, in architecture, in

colour, in great literature and great music, furnishes at least one way of approach to the place that is holiest of all. Beauty if it cannot itself save souls may at least help in their saving. And there are some for whom ugliness and every offence against the canons of good taste silence, for the moment at least, a sensitive chord ready to tremble into the music of true adoration.

Then—to pass outside the temple walls—our national neglect of beauty in the disposition and arrangement of our great cities has been nothing short of sin, a sin against the human souls of their inhabitants. We are proud of our great industrial advance. Yet what a price has been paid for it, and often quite needlessly.

If we ask what were the chief architectural features of the nineteenth century, the answer is factories, smoky chimneys and slum tenements. But in that century also “there was a man sent from God whose name was John.” There was a gospel of beauty with John Ruskin for its prophet. Like many great prophets, he preached to deaf ears and stony hearts. It was an age of utilitarianism bent on filling purses, not on creating fine personalities ; on ransacking the bowels of the earth, not on beautifying its surface.

And now in the twentieth century we are reaping the consequences. It is the old story of the fathers eating sour grapes and the children's teeth being set on edge. Had the great captains of industry of last century been able to look ahead, had they listened to prophets like John Ruskin and Stopford Brooke, there would have been much less labour unrest in our own time. Any barracks then was good enough for working men. They were herded and, worst of all, herded together, in miners' rows and one- or two-roomed tenements, without the most elementary conditions of domestic decency. They were robbed of all contact with the green grass with which God clothed the fields, deprived of the sight of wild flowers that out-glорied Solomon; shut off from the matins of the lark and the evensong of the nightingale.

What happened? What, in the name of common sense, could be expected to happen? Do men gather figs from thistles or grapes from thorns? What *could* come of it but what has come, dwarfed bodies, dulled minds, vicious tastes, thwarted instincts, unsatisfied desires and a legacy of suspicion and smouldering fires of hate to be faced and, as so often happens, atoned and suffered for by a

generation honourably turning its face to better things.

I have spoken of town life. But save for God's out of doors, the village in its domestic arrangement and architectural features has often been little better. Did you ever see uglier villages in beautiful surroundings than you can see in many parts of Scotland? Was ever a worse artistic use made of a ravishingly beautiful environment?

and it may be asked
Now you may ask what religion ~~has~~ to do with all this? My first and most general answer is that religion has to do with everything; and if not with everything, with nothing. For man's nature is a unity and God's universe a harmony. But more particularly religion has to do with this, because religion deals with obligations; and a Church that in its various services emphasises the sanctity of birth, marriage and death cannot afford to neglect life or any of the essential parts of human nature. Clean, healthy bodies, decent domestic arrangements, beautiful surroundings, wholesome recreations, are all alike necessary to the growth of the human spirit. The call of the beautiful implies a duty, and because it has social and moral consequences it is a religious duty. It is little to the credit of the Church that she has been so silent about

matters in which human souls as well as human bodies are so vitally concerned. There are other and it may be more important reasons why even in densely populated areas great masses of human beings are outside the Church. But this is one reason, one that tells all the time in every family and in every individual. The thwarted instinct for beauty takes its fearful revenge in low pleasures and soul-destroying vices. Devotion to his garden plot has kept many a man in these last years from the public-house, and in some instances has been the means of awaking or restoring a dormant interest in higher things. It never pays to deny legitimate exercise to any essential part of human nature. And the sense of beauty is an essential part, as you can see in any little child. The child is injured by being brought up in an ugly environment, and it is the Church's business to see to the spiritual development of the child.

The love of beauty, innate in the child, shows itself also in the childhood of the race. The earliest traces of nationalities are prehistoric attempts at art. Similarly, in literature poetry arises before prose. The childhood of the nation turns instinctively to what can be sung rather than to the prosaic. In later days of which we have an historic record

as well as existing memorials, we see how in varying degrees the charm of art was felt, and how the expression of it was the spiritual bloom in each nation's life. It was so in Greece, in India and in Egypt. Mediæval Europe saw a great efflorescence of the same spiritual satisfaction: in Norman and Gothic cathedrals, in Italian painting and sculpture, in German music, in Dutch painting, Dante's poetry, Palestrina's music, not to speak of Bach and Handel in later times, Da Vinci and Rubens. All these names suggest religion as inevitably as art. Art to them was worship, the human faculty bowed in adoration, singing with the angels, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory."

Churches that set no value on things beautiful, within their walls and without, have not only repelled many fine souls, but the masses as well. And nations that neglect beauty are injuring personality and laying up for themselves many troubles. For the gate beautiful is a way, a legitimate, a natural and therefore a God-appointed way, into the holy temple. There would be more beauty of holiness in the world if there was more practical recognition of the holiness of beauty. In the common life no less than in the

religious, the divine message stands : Whatsoever things are lovely, think on these things.
If we were more careful to adorn the doctrine, to make the teaching beautiful, we would be more successful in drawing men to Him who is the chief among ten thousand and the *altogether* lovely.

XIII

Spring Song of the New World

“The earth is deeply watered, softly doth the moisture go down
upon the root of every green thing.”

Psalms of the West.

XIII

Spring Song of the New World

"The flowers appear on the earth, and the time of the singing of birds is come."—SONG OF SOL. ii. 12.

"THE word of God is the creation we behold." Tom Paine, devout Tom Paine whom our fathers called an infidel, spoke thus in protest against the notion that God's word is confined to written documents.

Of course it is not, although we can never be too thankful for the documents, especially those of them which preserve for us the precious record of Christ. It is from the Gospels we learn that Christ Himself bade men study more than the documents. Look at the birds, He said. Study the spring flowers. And He showed us how. For :

"When He walked the fields He drew
From the flowers and birds and dew
Parables of God."

The word of God is His creation. Not His whole word. Not even it may be His highest,

but still His word. A word older than man, yet ever new and ever wonderful. Never more so than when springtime comes: when, as Browning says, earth changes like a human face and God renews His ancient rapture.

"The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of the birds is come." And that is God telling us of His own love of beauty, His delight in living things:—birds that nest and sing in the branches of great trees, the living green of the grass, the flowers in their infinite variety and beauty.

He bids us share His joy, calls us to put off our solemn robes awhile, rest our tired brains from problems too great for us, and be content to live light in the Spring, to sing care-free like the thrush, to grow as the lilies do, to let the sap of God rise in our hearts as it does in the trees, to let the great life quicken our souls as it does the roots hid in the earth until they reach up to grasp the sunlight and the dew, and break into bud and blossom.

That was how Jesus Himself put it in Galilee long ago. Turn from your anxious thoughts, He said, from your problems, cares and worries, and look at the spring flowers. Consider the lilies how *they* grow, not by taking thought, but simply by accepting the

divine largesse, by following the law of their being. That is indeed what they do, and the result is beauty ; a beauty and perfection which are a reproach to man, God's highest work, and the sad mess he makes of things and of himself.

The lily grows and achieves its perfection of form and colour—all living things do except man—by being exactly what it was meant to be, and letting God do for it what it cannot do for itself. That, in a single sentence, is the true philosophy of life. Christ would have us all return to that simple and sufficient gospel. "Study the spring flowers how they grow," He said. For the Father of all spirits is also the Maker of everything that lives, the God of singing birds and forest trees, of violet and anemone, of all the beauty and fragrance and music that make the world a glory and delight. All these win their perfection, their glory and their beauty by accepting and doing the part assigned to them, and letting God do the rest. And God does it. You say "Yes, but they want so little. They are not like us"; and on the face of it that is quite true. One of the things Jesus meant when He said, "Study the flowers," was just that we had artificially multiplied our wants and thereby introduced quite needless worries and cares, in

the multitude of which we were prevented from realising our true life. We missed the great things amid the distractions of myriads of small things that really didn't matter, and were not worth worrying about. We lost our souls gaining the world. We missed God. We forgot the end in the means. As if, to use a phrase of Emerson's, we were here simply to wear out our own boots and not to glorify God and win our souls. A system under which the lives of men and women are worried to distraction is a system which stands condemned by that fact. And one of the consequences of recognising the things of God and the human spirit as supreme, would be a great simplification of life, a great increase of serenity and true happiness.

But let us come back to the flowers that appear on the earth. Take the simplest of them, some little wild flower that grows in the meadow or on the hillside. In one sense, as you say, its wants are few, but in another its wants and its needs are so mighty and so manifold that it needs the whole universe, the earth and the heavens, working together to satisfy them.

The life of even the most minute bit of vegetation depends on the changing seasons,

on the revolution of the star worlds. The entire system of nature is a unity and a harmony, where a single discord would throw the whole out of gear. "What an imagination God has," said Tennyson once. Yes, and what a poem we might say Creation is.

"Trees in their blooming,
Tides in their flowing,
Stars in their circling,
Tremble with song."

"God on His throne
Is Eldest of poets;
Unto His measures
Moveth the whole."

And the measures never halt. The music is never interrupted. Before the flowers appear on the earth or the time of the singing of birds can come, a thousand wonderful things must happen, some of them on the earth itself, and others beyond the earth. The meanest flower that blows depends for its existence on myriads of what we in our cold phraseology call secondary causes, as well as on the ultimate cause, the mysterious gift of the potency of life, this last being a fathomless mystery leaving the greatest mind simply awestruck before the final mystery, the mystery of God Himself, the source and fountain of all life and existence.

Take one of the secondary causes, without

which there would be no springtime. What happens is this. After the winter solstice the sun in the southern hemisphere sends his call, and, slowly turning on her axis, the earth answers and floats into his warm and quickening embrace. And it is then as she turns her face to her mighty lover that all Nature around us here bursts into multitudinous music, lifting up her psalm of life, her spring song, her great marriage hymn of earth and heaven. All that before one small flowerlet can appear or one thrush in the woodland pour its first fine careless rapture on the wandering winds. That little flower has few wants? Nay, its wants—not artificial, for it has none such—its real wants are infinite, and all earth and all the heavens must combine before they can be supplied. For nothing that lives is isolated.

“Nothing on this earth is single ;
All things by a law Divine
In each other’s being mingle !”

And nothing on this earth lives from the earth alone. “The worlds, the elements, the creatures, all blend and interblend,” the lowest is linked to the highest by a necessary and inevitable law.

“Winds wander and dews drip earthward,
Rain falls, suns rise and set,
Earth whirls, and all but to prosper
A poor little violet.”

But man, less wise than the flower, man with his dust and his noise, his feverish hands clutching at baubles, alone forgets the infinite sources of his life, the conditions of his true growth and renewal (where he needs renewal most) in the spirit of his mind. Is not that why, when earth's springtime comes, the springtime of man's soul tarries? Are all the mighty astronomical heavens needful that one little flower should bloom in the springtime, and can the spirit of man grow or his heart be renewed without any commerce with the skies?

"Study the spring flowers," said Jesus. See God clothe the grass of the field, and then look at your own ways. Why is Nature so quiet and man so noisy? Why all the hurry and worry, the clanging of laborious wheels, the confusion and the discord? Does the springtime come so to the earth? Do you hear any raucous noise of strife? And is the difference not just as Jesus said, that the flower lets the heavenly Father have His great way with it?

If the human world had its face to the sun, if man's earth like God's earth would answer the attraction of its heavenly orb and turn to the light of life, the Sun of Righteousness, how soon, how quietly, how naturally,

for the human world would the great spring-time come.

And it is coming. But how slowly. It is only tardily and partially that the heart of man is moving. Only fitfully and over limited areas is the pull of the heavenly forces felt. It is our fault, our grievous fault. The fault of all of us, high and low. Too many of the men who occupy the places of power, like multitudes of other men, are shortsighted and earth-bound. They do not see the need of God. They do not understand—these men who have the direction of the big things—that the straight road is the shortest; that the divine way is the only way; that the universe is a harmony and not a discord, and that if they would take the beat from the heavenly Conductor the discord would be resolved, and the warring elements blend into a perfect music. As the earth without the sun would be a desolation, so humanity without God.

"When will men learn," wrote John Pulsford, "that God attracting men and quickening men through Christ is pure philosophy. In other words, it is the law of His operation." The law of the flower is the law of the spirit of man. And the sun of man's soul is the Lord Christ. When the dark human world

turns its face to Him, then the flowers will appear in its heart, and the time of its singing come.

Renewal, growth, are the great notes in Nature's spring song. And both are from above. "This is my beloved Son, hear Him." The new world waits on the renewed heart. And the only maker of the new heart is Christ. The whole creation is in travail, says St. Paul, waiting for the manifestation of the Son of God. And that day will surely come. Every soul that now takes Christ's way for itself is speeding it. Every soul true to Him has already in itself the gladness of the springtime, the foretaste of what is surely coming. Its lamp of hope is lit. Already it sees coming for all what it knows in the quickening of its own life. It can join in Isaiah's prophetic song of a happier earth, his spring song of the better world to be:

"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God ; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth ; so the Lord

God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations."

And meanwhile the Sun of Righteousness is in the heavens, and His beams of healing fall on us whenever we open the window of our souls to His light. They fall on our sorrows and, lo, they are comforted ; they fall on our barrenness, and, lo, it is springtime for us. For us the flowers appear on the earth, and the time of the singing of birds is come. The dew and the sunlight feed our hearts, and they push out tendrils to the skies.

"Children we are and unheeding, but oh, how the
heavens are bending,
Bending their beauty to earthward that we may
look up and rejoice."

For the Word has become flesh and dwells among us. The infinite God is our Father. And we are all held in the everlasting arms.

The great Father-and-Mother gathers us—and those who have passed before us—into those wide, loving arms, and no time, no space, no separation touches us there. They are everlasting arms ; and to realise that we are inside them is to know ourselves at home in a universe, silent no longer, no longer mysterious, but flooded with harmony and light, the veil between already rent by faith in Christ the Sun of Righteousness, Christ the

light of our dark sky, whom, having not seen we love, and in whom we already rejoice with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. "The time of the singing of the birds is where Christ is." When He comes into the heart, Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, and the flowers appear on the earth.

THE LIBRARY
CLARK COLLEGE, CALIF.

BV Allan, Charles
4501 The new world. Greenock, James M'Kelvie
A5 [19--]
v, 175p. 21cm.

1. Christian life. I. Title.

CCSC/mmb

A02271

THEOLOGY LIBRARY
CLAREMONT, CALIF.

A02271

